

角川つばさ文庫

# Ace Phoenix Wright Attorney™

Turnabout  
Airport

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# Character Introductions

**W**  
Trucy  
right



A magician girl who is Phoenix's adopted daughter.

**C**  
Athena  
kykes



A new attorney at the Wright Anything Agency.

**E**  
Miles  
Edgeworth



Head of the prosecutor's office. Chief Prosecutor and Phoenix's rival.

**F**  
Maya



A spirit medium who was once Phoenix's assistant.

**W**  
Phoenix  
right



An attorney armed with an innate sense of justice and the belief to defend his clients in court. Head of the Wright Anything Agency.

**J**  
Apollo  
Justice



A hot blooded attorney whose loud voice echoes throughout the courtroom. Works at the Wright Anything Agency.

**G**  
Klavier  
Gavin



A genius who became a prosecutor at the age of 17. His hobby is being the vocalist of the band the Gavingers.



A politician with a clean image.



Ramon and Armen's grandfather.



Ramon's grade school aged younger brother.



Apollo's friend. A ramen vendor.



A doctor. Goodwin's GP.



A master of "Temple style" flower arrangements.



Works checking carry on baggage at the airport.

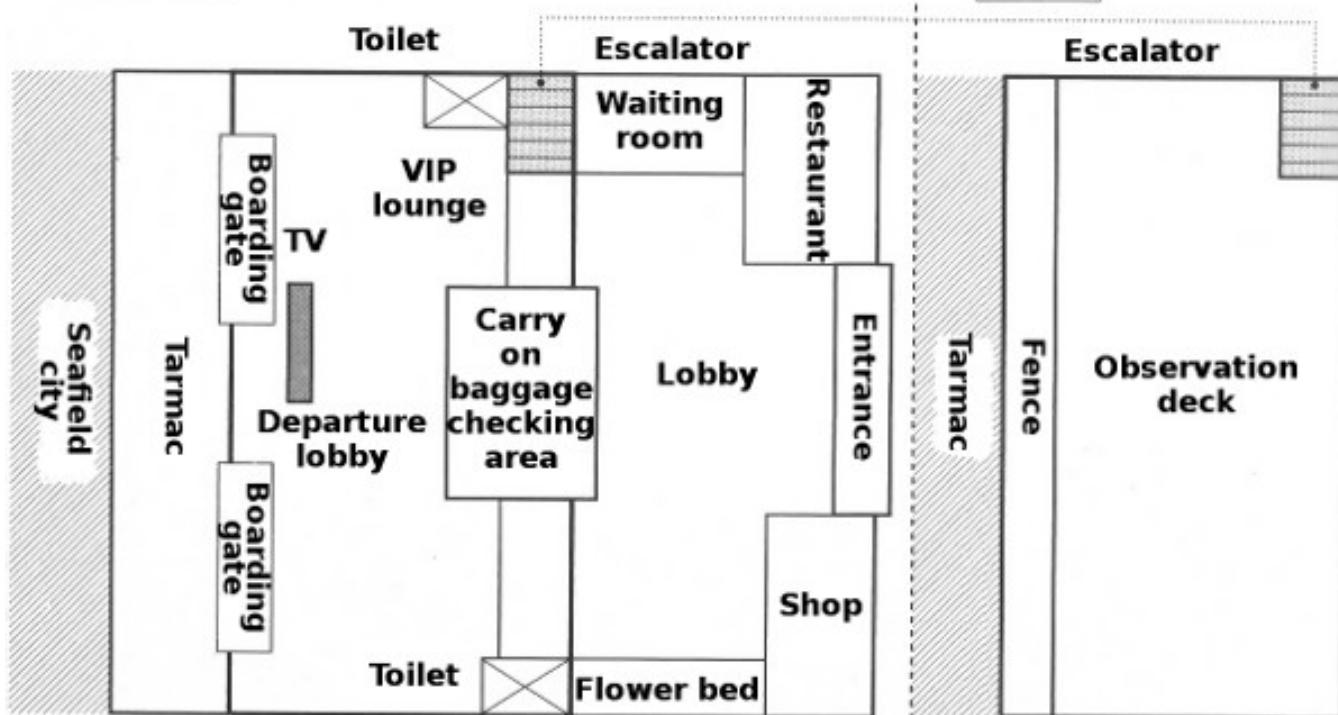


Goodwin's constantly calm secretary.

## AIRPORT MAP

1F

2F



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# Chapter 1. A Shocking Arrest

[March 12, 5:46 PM: Seafield Airport]

**“Wooah...! Wh-what are you doing...!?”**

The man shouted suddenly in a strained voice as he turned and collapsed.

“... Eh?”

I instinctively caught the man. Or rather, I was unable to hold back the great force with which he fell.

The man's body weight was a little too much for me to bear on my own. With the man's weight upon me, I fell on my rear.

The man collapsed face first and didn't move.

A sudden illness?

I only noticed when I tried calling out to the man.

Blood was oozing out somewhere around the side of his shirt.

... Eh? Why is he bleeding...?

People who had heard the man's voice were now gathering.

The very first one to run up was a man in an expensive looking suit and a pair of metal framed glasses. He got down to his knees and lifted the fallen man.

“Boss! Boss, pull yourself together! What happened, boss!?”

A man with a moustache put a hand on his shoulder to stop him.

“Stop, don't shake him! We need to stop the bleeding!”

The third person to arrive was a woman in traditional Japanese garb. She touched the fallen man and let out a scream. “Gyaah.”

“E-emergency! He's bleeding! He's been stabbed!”

“Who!? Who would do this to the boss...!?”

The man with the glasses looked around with bloodshot eyes, before settling his gaze upon me, still sitting dumbfounded on my butt.

“Was it you!?”

“Eh...? N-no, I'd never...”

“You killed my boss! You bastard...!”

“I-I didn't. All I did was...”

The man in front of me had simply collapsed and I tried to support him.

But I doubt they'll buy that story.

"He's the culprit! Apprehend him!"

"Aah... How could this... Boss!"

The carry on baggage checking area had fallen into chaos. Airport staff and passengers were all shouting and pointing at me.

You're wrong. I didn't do it.

But— When I looked down and saw what was gripped within my own hand, I was shocked.

An ice pick with the tip covered in blood. My mind couldn't comprehend the situation.

While I was still dazed, airport staff had grabbed me by both arms.

The ice pick dropped to the ground with a hard sound.

The man with the moustache spoke as he glared at me.

"So that ice pick is the murder weapon then? Nobody touch it. Leave it as it is until the police arrive."



“No... I didn't...!”

I finally managed to raise my voice, but it was too late. Far too late.

“Hey... You're... No way...”

A trembling voice came from behind me. I turned to look, my friend – Ramon, stared at me with his eyes wide open.

“Why... Why would you... Apollo!”

You're wrong!

No matter what, I... Apollo Justice would never stab anyone!

[March 13, 9:00 AM: Wright Anything Agency]

“Apollo killed a man? No way, there's no way I'd believe a joke like that!”

The moment she heard the news, Athena burst out in cheerful laughter.

Trucy also nodded hard enough to almost drop the silk hat she was wearing from her head.

“That's right, Daddy. It's downright ridiculous to even consider it.”

“Guess we better settle it. I mean, they're probably holding him without a shred of evidence, right? You won't even need to lift a finger, Mr. Wright...”

“I'm afraid not.”

I replied in a dejected tone.

Athena and Trucy looked at each other, then looked to me with puzzled expressions.

“What do you mean? There's no way you seriously doubt Apollo's innocence...”

“I can't believe it, Daddy!”

... Of course not. I know 100% that Apollo is innocent. I don't doubt it in the slightest, but...

“The situation isn't exactly favourable...”

I spoke heavily, shaking my head without any energy.

My name is Phoenix Wright. I'm a defence attorney in charge of running the “Wright Anything Agency”. The reason for the ridiculous “Anything Agency” name... is kind of a long story, so I'll skip that for now. Anyway, our office isn't just a law firm, from defending in the courtroom to magic shows... our agency does it all.

Supporting me in my role as chief are my three talented subordinates.

First up, our magician, Trucy Wright. She's my daughter... We're not related by blood, but due to certain circumstances I ended up adopting her. She's still only in high school, but she's incredibly level headed and mature. You could even call her the "shadow chief" of this office.

Next up, is Athena Cykes. She's a genius girl who studied in Europe and gained her qualifications as a lawyer at the age of 18. She's more active, spontaneous and easy going than the average girl, but no one is better than her at applying analytical psychology in the courtroom. She may be inexperienced, but she's reliable.

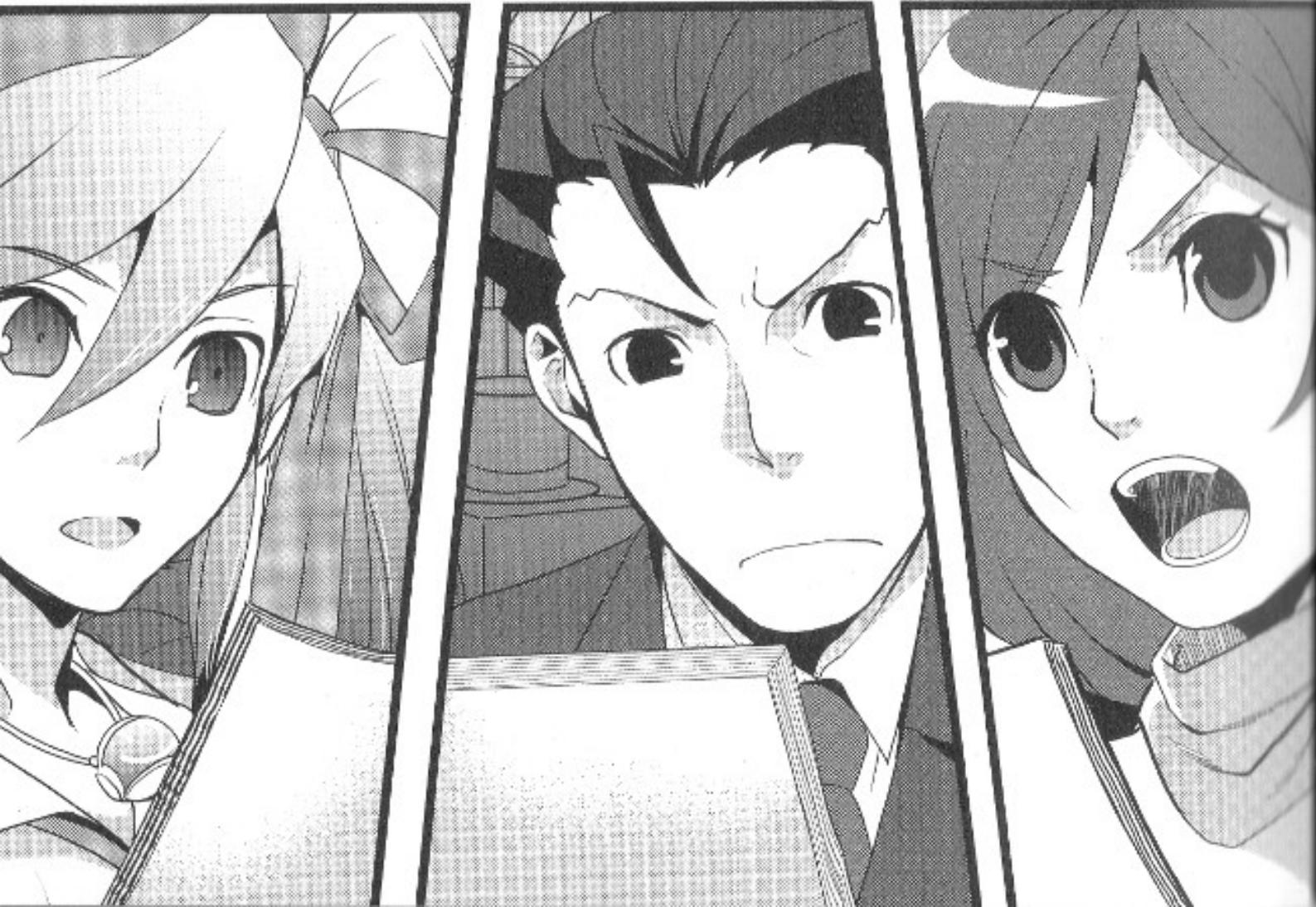
And then there's one more person supporting me— The hot blooded attorney, Apollo Justice.

The suspect of the case at hand.

"The incident occurred shortly before six o'clock last night. It was in the carry on baggage checking area at Seafield Airport."

As I was beginning my explanation, Athena cut in.

"Seafield Airport is that new airport that was built in the last few years, right?"



“Yeah. It may be small in scale and about 40 minutes from the city by car, but they're fully equipped. Although since it's inconvenient to catch the train there, they take on less passengers than they were hoping.”

“So that airport is where Polly...”

I nodded in response to Trucy.

“That's right. Apollo was taking a vacation and was planning to travel on his own. He was planning to leave from Seafield Airport on his own, but there's a friend of his who lives near the airport.”

“Ramon Berger, right?”

Athena confirmed his name while looking at the documents she had on hand. I nodded.

“That's right. Ramon runs a ramen shop not far from the airport. Apollo took the rare opportunity to catch up with Ramon and hang out and chat before departing the following day.

Apollo arrived in Seafield city the day before the incident – that is, March 11th. He visited his friend Ramon Berger and had dinner together.

He stayed the night at Ramon's house and they enjoyed a drive around the neighbourhood the following day.

Then, as the time of departure approached, Ramon drove him to the airport around 5:30 PM.

At the airport, Apollo went his separate way from Ramon and headed to have his carry on baggage checked.

That's when the incident occurred.

The man in front of Apollo in the queue suddenly shouted “What are you doing” and collapsed.

“Apollo tried to support the man when he fell. But the man had lost all strength and collapsed completely. People came over to help the man back up, but he was already unconscious. Apollo was apprehended and by the time the police arrived, the man was already dead.”

“And he was arrested? But that's so weird...”

Athena spoke unsatisfied.

“I mean, it's normal to try and support someone when they collapse right in front of you? Anyone would've done the same thing.”

“But, the victim had been stabbed. And on top of that, Apollo was holding an ice pick in his hand.

“... What!?”

Athena and Trucy raised their voices in unison. “What!?” is exactly what I'd like to say about this too.

“The wound wasn't too deep, not typically a fatal injury. But the tip of the weapon was coated in poison.”

“Poison...!?”

“The poison spread through the victim's body and killed him. The ice pick Apollo was holding had both the victim's blood and the poison on it.”

Athena and Trucy were lost for words.

I quietly spoke the decisive words.

“—The wound in the victim's left side perfectly matches the shape of the ice pick Apollo was holding. The only fingerprints found on the handle of the ice pick were Apollo's too.”

“Then that means...”

Trucy spoke with a perplexed expression.

“That Polly is 100% the culprit behind it...?”

“I'll never believe it!”

Athena shouted.

“No matter what the situation was, Apollo would never kill anyone! He just wouldn't!”

“Yeah, that's right. I believe in Apollo too.”

Trucy nodded to my response.

“Which means that Polly was framed by someone – and they're the real culprit.”

“Yeah.”

Though the turbulence in my heart hasn't settled down quite yet, I lifted my head.

That's right – For now, I'll believe completely in Apollo's innocence. No matter the reason, Apollo would never kill anyone.

The true culprit must have tricked Apollo somehow.

That's all the reason I need to take this case. No matter the odds against me, I will protect Apollo!

[Same Day, 10:35 AM: Detention Center]

I was relieved to see Apollo in higher spirits than I'd expected. Having not slept all night, his eyes were a little drooped, but otherwise he was his usual self.

“Sorry to make you worry like this, Mr. Wright!”

His voice was as loud as always too.

“No, it's fine. Anyway, it's time I heard your side of the story.”

“Right!”

Apollo and I were separated by a transparent acrylic barrier. I could hear his voice from the other side of the 'communication hole'.

It was an odd feeling.

It's normal for me to speak to my clients here in the detention center like this, but it's not common to have one of my employees on the other side of the wall.

“I'd arrived at Seafield Airport ready to depart for my vacation. My friend Ramon Berger was there to see me off... I've told you about Ramon before, right?”

“Yeah, your friend who runs a ramen shop.”

“He's a little short tempered, but a good guy. So we parted ways and I headed to the carry on baggage check... Then... Oh right, this might be unrelated to the incident, but.”

Apollo seemed to recall something.

“Before I went to the baggage check area, Ramon and I stood around talking for a bit. I was thanking him for his hospitality... Which is when something interesting occurred.”

“What was it?”

“There was a man heading over to the baggage check on his own, when Ramon took notice of him and went over to say something.”

“Did he know the guy? What did he say?”

“He was speaking quietly, so I didn't hear him. But I thought it was odd, the serious expression Ramon had. The man seemed to ignore him, but Ramon grabbed his arm to hold him back. The man just shook him off and kept walking without saying anything.”

Apollo knitted his brows as he continued.

“The thing is, that man became the victim.”

“Eh?”

“The politician who was killed, Truman Goodwin.”

“Hold it right there.”

Unrelated to the incident...?

Apollo's vague wording may be his fear to suspect that his friend Ramon may be involved.

But it was right after this that the victim collapsed and died. I need to hear more details about this.

"The victim Mr. Goodwin was a prominent politician in Seafield city. I hear he spent many years on the local council, had the trust of the public and was quite outspoken..."

"Sounds about right. However, I had no idea what Mr. Goodwin even looked like, I had no idea who he even was at the time. I asked Ramon 'Is something wrong?', but he told me 'It's nothing' and wouldn't elaborate further. He was looking kind of pale, but despite my concerns I didn't have time to ask him in detail as my plane's departure time was coming up. So I said my goodbyes to him and went to have my carry on baggage checked."

The carry on baggage checking area is a place where any luggage passengers take onto a plane is examined. If you have any dangerous items like a knife, they'll be confiscated there.

"It was a weekday, so there weren't that many passengers. So the man in front of me in the queue was the same man Ramon went after – Mr. Goodwin. Just as I was about to put my bag down for inspection, something fell near my feet."

"What was it?"

"I just picked it up without thinking about what it was. I figured it must have been dropped by the man in front of me, but..."

Could it be that was...?

Apollo continued with difficulty.

"At that moment, Mr. Goodwin screamed 'Woah!' followed by a shout of 'What are you doing?' as he turned around and collapsed right in front of me. In my shock, I tried to support him, but I wasn't able to and fell over. That's when I noticed. Mr. Goodwin had begun bleeding through the left side of his shirt."

"Hold it for a moment."

I interjected.

"The victim shouted 'What are you doing?'. So was that the moment he was stabbed...?"

"But I was the only one near him. The other passengers had already had their bags checked and were waiting at the departure gate. I mean, the inspection officer was there, but he was on the other side of the inspection bench, he never touched the victim."

Nobody had touched the victim other than Apollo.

Yet he had shouted "What are you doing?"... I wonder what that was about.

"After his scream rang out, the people in the departure gate came running to try and help the fallen Mr. Goodwin. And that was when I finally realised that I was holding the ice pick."

"So you'd picked I up just before that."

"Yeah. Then people started pointing to me saying 'He's the culprit'. I didn't have any chance to explain myself. Even Ramon doubted me..."

Apollo covered his face, it was as if he lost all his energy at once.

Even his friend doubted him – There's nothing harsher than that.

The pain and fear of when nobody will believe in you, I experienced it back when I was a kid. A theft had occurred in my classroom, and everyone blamed me for it.

Not even our teacher believed me. It was that painful experience that inspired me to become a defence attorney. To be there for the lonely people without anyone on their side when they plead their innocence – That's what I want to do.

"Apollo. No matter what, I believe in you."

Apollo raised his head, life returning to his face with my words.

"Mr. Wright..."

"Of course. Trucy and Athena are 100% behind you as well."

Apollo broke into a smile.

"I believe in you too. I knew you'd say something



like that, Mr. Wright.”

... He said.

The situation is unusually tough. From an objective point of view, there's no possible suspect other than Apollo. But the evidence has to exist. The culprit has to have left a loose thread somewhere in their twisted tapestry that I can pull to break this case apart.

All I have to do if find it.

[Same Day, 11:40 AM: Wright Anything Agency]

After listening to my story, Athena crossed her arms to think.

“Hmmm... So basically, the victim shouted 'Woah, what are you doing?' without anyone even touching him. I wonder what that was about.”

Trucy said.

“Maybe the killer attacked from a distance? The killer threw the ice pick from the other side of the room and it stabbed the victim.”

“I'm not sure that's actually possible...?”

“You're always a perfect shot though, Trucy. Except when you miss.”

... If she misses, then she's not always a perfect shot.

Athena spoke vigorously.

“Even if it didn't stab him properly, as long as it scratched him, the poison would circulate through the victim's body. The culprit threw the ice pick, it lightly wounded the victim and fell on the floor at Apollo's feet...”

“No, the order doesn't add up.”

I shook my head.

“According to Apollo, the ice pick fell by his feet first. It was after that that the victim shouted 'What are you doing?' and collapsed.”

“Hmmm... Then maybe the would was small enough he didn't notice the moment he was stabbed? Which is why he had a delayed reaction...”

“Sitting around here making wild guesses isn't going to help our case. I'm going to the crime scene. Athena, you're with me. Trucy, you take care of the office while we're gone.”

“Got it!”

I stood up and left the office with Athena.

# Chapter 2. To the Scene of the Crime

[Same Day, 2:15 PM: Seafield Airport]

Only 40 minutes from the city by car! That's the phrase Seafield Airport advertise themselves with...

There's something I'd like to add to that. If you're going by train, you need to take three different lines and it takes over two hours.

“Wouldn't it have been faster to just walk here?”

By the time we reached the airport, even Athena's expression was worn out.

“Would you like to walk back to the office then?”

That was meant to be a joke, but Athena suddenly became lively and flashed the peace sign with her fingers.

“Fine by me! I prefer walking to sitting still on a train anyway! We can make it a race to see who gets back to the office first, Mr. Wright!”

... I forgot. Athena has impressive guts and stamina, is highly competitive and hates losing.

“Sorry, my bad. That was a joke.”

“Ah! I see... That's a shame. Let me know if you change your mind.”

It seems like she really wanted to walk. Athena's worn out expression returned.

“By the way...”

Athena sighed as she surveyed the area.

“Why build an airport in such an inconvenient location? I mean, they should've build a direct rail line to go with it.”

“Apparently, that was the plan originally. But the airport cost more than they expected and there wasn't enough left for the rail line. They were running shuttle buses for a little while, but it wasn't long until they got shut down too.”

“And as a result, they get barely any passengers, it's such a waste though.”

Just as Athena said, the spacious airport was deserted. To the point where there seemed to be more airport staff and shop employees than actual passengers.

I considered that maybe it was because of the incident, but the planes are flying to their regular schedule, so I guess it's just always like this.

“It's a really nice airport, it's such a shame.”

Being a fairly new building, it was nice and clean inside, but with a few personal touches. The lobby was quite wide, there was a flower bed containing southern flowers and the open deck facing

the tarmac gave it an open feel. Although even with the resort-like furnishings, without any customers it felt quite desolate.

Anyway, we headed for the crime scene.

The carry on baggage check area was also deserted. There was a line drawn to indicate where passengers should queue, with the inspection platform to the right of it. But there wasn't a single passenger getting their bags examined today. Only a bored looking young inspection officer standing there. I was expecting there to at least be some police examining the crime scene, but I guess not. I suppose they have both their suspect and murder weapon already, so maybe they didn't feel the need to search for anything else.

I spoke up to the bored looking examination officer.

"Excuse me. We'd like to ask some questions about yesterday's incident."

"Eh?"

The inspection officer regarded us with suspicion.

"Why are you asking? If you're cops, I already told you everything yesterday..."

"No, we aren't police."

"Newspaper journalists? Or magazine columnists? I've got nothing to say to you."

He was blunt. But I'm used to this kind of treatment. I spoke politely.

"We aren't reporters. We're the suspect's lawyers."

"Lawyers...?"

The inspection officer's expression became even sterner.

"I've nothing to tell you. I'm busy at the moment.

... If this is what he calls "busy", then a sleeping cat is really busy.

"It won't take long, if you could just tell us about the time of the incident..."

Just as I was starting to get desperate.

A woman with a small suitcase approached.

She wore an extravagant kimono and her hair done up with large wooden Japanese hair ornaments. Her thick make up made it hard to pin down her age, but I'd place my guess at somewhere between 30 and 100.

The suitcase she had with her had a large logo reading "Temple Style Master" on it.

That suitcase was quite the self promotion tool...



The woman glared at me and spoke in a shrill voice.

“Oh my, it seems you have no luggage to be examined. Then step aside. I'm in a hurry.”

Athena and I moved out of the way.

The woman put her suitcase on the examination platform with a thud and spoke to the examination officer.

“The plane will be departing today as planned?”

“Yes, there's no delays.”

“I couldn't get on the plane because of that big commotion yesterday, it was quite the inconvenience. Those police were so insistent despite how many times I told them it had nothing to do with me. It has quite ruined my vacation plans.”

The way she was chewing out the examination officer almost felt as if she were blaming him personally.

... Either way, this woman was apparently planning to catch last night's flight. It seems that because of the murder incident, she had missed her flight and was planning to get another one today.

“Um... Excuse me, may we ask you a few questions?”

When I spoke up, she turned to look at me and broke into a smile.

The expression on her face made her look almost like a different person to before.

However, her eyes weren't smiling, they were a little intimidating.

“Questions, you say? Aha, oh my, of course, you want to enroll in the Temple Style? Hoho, I gladly accept. We can begin the formalities immediately. I'll make the application fee \$1000 as a special service. Of course, I will also accept the payment in instalments.”

... What. What have I gotten into? I shook my head in a panic.

“No, that's not it. We're not interested in enrollment, we're interested in the incident that happened yesterday. Were you a witness to the crime?”

The woman's expression immediately changed to annoyed.

“Huuuh? That's all, tch... So you're not applicants? Tch, to think I wasted my manners on you.”

“Uh... Okay. I'm the suspect's lawyer and we're here to investigate the incident...”

“Investigate? I don't know anything about the incident.”

“But you were here when it occurred yesterday? Anything is fine, just tell us what you saw...”

“I said I don't know anything. I'm in a hurry. I don't want to miss my flight again. Out of the way.”

The woman brushed us aside and walked through the metal detector, reclaimed her suitcase when it came through inspection and headed for the departure gate.

We were unable to enter the area beyond without any plane tickets. It's unfortunate, but we'll

have to give up on speaking to that woman.

Athena groaned in frustration.

"We spent two hours getting here and came up with nothing. We haven't even got any witnesses to talk to..."

I looked at the inspection officer and he turned the other way, he seems intent on ignoring us. The way he's so reluctant to talk seems suspicious.

He would've been the closest witness to the crime. Which means he's got to be one of the witnesses testifying in the trial. He won't be able to give us the silent treatment in court. I'll make sure to draw out every last detail of what he saw.

Athena and I left the carry on baggage inspection area and headed for the exit.

The inspection officer wasn't the only witness. Since we came all the way out here, we're going to get all the details we can.

"Let's go see Apollo's friend Ramon. He was at the scene as well. Then we'll visit the office of the victim, Mr. Goodwin..."

As soon as I'd spoken those words.

"— I knew you'd be here."

I stopped in my tracks when I heard the familiar voice.

Athena spoke up in surprise as she turned around.

"Ah, Prosecutor Edgeworth...!"

Standing behind us with his unsociable expression was my friend and current chief prosecutor – Miles Edgeworth.

An unexpected face in an unexpected place.

I decided to ask.

"Why are you here? I'm guessing a vacation... isn't on the cards right now."

"I haven't got time for a vacation. I'm here on business."

"By business, do you mean investigating yesterday's incident...?"

No, there's no reason the chief prosecutor would be looking into a murder case.

Edgeworth magnificently dodged the question with his reply.

"I was truly shocked. I never thought your subordinate would end up as a murder suspect."

I shook my head and cut him off.

"Apollo didn't do it. The real culprit is out there somewhere."

"I suppose you'll be defending him in court."

"Of course."

"And you're here to gather evidence to build your case?"

"— We just arrived at the airport earlier. Now we'll be speaking to other related parties."

"Try not to get your hopes up."

Edgeworth said without a hint of a smile.

That said, throughout the many years I've known him, I could probably still count the number of times he's actually smiled.

"What do you mean?"

"Mr. Goodwin was a popular politician. The people of this city are still in shock over his death. I doubt many of them will be willing to discuss the incident."

"... Eh?"

Edgeworth spoke matter of factly, but I was taken slightly aback.

A politician trusted by the public has been killed. Isn't this exactly the kind of thing people would want to talk about? To band together and bring the terrible person who killed him to justice...

But before I could open my mouth to voice my questions, Edgeworth spoke.

"I'll leave you to your own devices now. If you'll excuse me."

And he walked off without a moment of hesitation. Of course, I didn't bother calling out to him. I knew full well that he wouldn't stop anyway.

"... Well that was odd. I wonder why Prosecutor Edgeworth was here at the airport?"

Athena tilted her head.

I spoke as I began walking.

"The work of the chief prosecutor is filled with mysteries. Come on, let's get moving..."

"I wonder why Prosecutor Edgeworth hates the victim so much?"

Athena seemed to be talking to herself.

Despite her whispering, I replied to her anyway.

"Hate? Edgeworth? He never said he hated the guy..."



“Not with his words, but I picked it up in the tone of his voice.”

I see.

Athena has incredible hearing. She can pick up on people's emotions just by hearing their voice, even if they're actively hiding it.

Sometimes it's clearer than their actual words.

Nothing gets past Athena's ears. The fact that Athena managed to pick up “hate” from what Edgeworth had said...

There must be some kind of connection between Edgeworth and Mr. Goodwin.

Had he done something to piss Edgeworth off?

[Same Day, 2:55 PM: The Flying Spaghetti Master]

Ramon's home was a ramen shop by the ocean.

Its name was “The Flying Spaghetti Master”.

It was a name suiting a ramen shop in an airport city.

While we were heading to the ramen shop, Athena let out a shout.

“Hyah! The wind sure is strong today!”

It was the kind of wind where if you weren't careful would blow you over. Athena's long hair fluttered in the wind like the stars and stripes.

I took the opportunity to dish out some knowledge I'd prepared in advance.

“It's not just today. This city has strong winds all year round.”

“Eh? Why?”

“It's the topography. We're close to the ocean, but the mountains aren't far either. This area has always been known as a windy city. The strong winds also cause trouble for the flight schedules.”

“Whaa!? But that means this is a ridiculous place to build an airport. Why did they build it in a place like this?”

Indeed... it seems an odd choice to put all that money into putting an airport just anywhere without any real thought.

Anyway, we finally reached “The Flying Spaghetti Master”.

It was a small shop with an old looking sign.

To be quite honest, it looked... worn out. I hate to say it, but it looked as though it might collapse under the force of the strong winds at any moment.

Athena faltered for a moment, but she's a true member of the Wright Anything Agency. She made a strong proclamation.

“Run down looking places like this are always the best. I can't wait to eat!”

“I'm sure I don't need to remind you, but we didn't come here for a meal...”

Though I said this, the best way to get the chef to open his mouth was to ask our questions while eating. Despite being the somewhat questionable time of just before three o'clock.

“You can eat ramen at any time! I know I'm eating.”

Athena spoke in an upbeat voice. I've already had a solid lunch, but I do enjoy having ramen almost as much as burgers...

As we opened the door we got a lifeless greeting.

“Hey, w'lcome.”

It was a narrow shop. The counter was in the shape of the letter L with eight legged round stools lined up along it. It may be due to the time of day, but there wasn't a single customer.

Behind the counter was a man wearing a T-shirt with long brown hair that was tied back. This must be Ramon Berger.

I took a seat and ordered my ramen innocently. The man nodded with a gloomy expression and began to parboil the noodles.

I looked around the shop a little before deciding to break the ice. Plastered on the wall was a slightly oily looking menu. Between the sheets of the menu, there were photos of aircraft conspicuously standing out.

Both jumbo jets and smaller jets were included. They were all beautiful photos showing them taking off into the grand skies.

“You like planes, I see.”

The man behind the counter curtly replied with a calm whisper.

“... Not particularly, it's my predecessor's interest.”

Predecessor, huh...? I knew the place looked old, but apparently it had been running for generations.

I decided to just cut to the chase.

“Excuse me, but you're Mr. Ramon Berger, right?”

“... Eh?”

The man lifted his head and regarded us with suspicion. I spoke in the most amiable tone possible.

“My name is Phoenix Wright. I'm representing Apollo who was arrested yester...”

“... Eh? Eeeeh!?”

Ramon pulled out and dumped the noodles in a rush (dangerous!) and turned to us in excitement.

“Wright as in Apollo's boss!? That's you!?”



“Y-yeah. Um, the noodles...”

“Seriously!? You should've told me sooner! Woah, thanks for coming. I've heard all about you from Apollo, I've always wanted to meet you!”

His speech and behaviour had suddenly changed dramatically.

He'd been about as lively as a wet noodle until just a moment ago.

Ramon's eyes shone as he introduced himself.

“I'm Ramon Berger. Apollo's pal.”

“Right. Apollo told us about you...”

“I've heard all about you too! I've heard a lot, Apollo has like, totally mad respect for you. We see each other for the first time in a while, hahaha, and all he talks about is you! How his boss at the office is totally awesome!”

“O-oh really?”

“You've got like, crazy bad luck! You've been beaten over the head, hit by a car, trampled by a herd of elephants and yet you've come away basically unscathed?”

... I recall nothing about any elephants.

“Plus you pull through your trials with bluffs and quips, making you the ultimate straight man! Apollo tells me that 'No other lawyer could pull off what Mr. Wright does'. You're amazing!”

... Apollo, what exactly have you been saying behind my back?

Ramon served up a bowl of ramen with a smile, laying them in front of us. Not only that, but he added a large serving of menma.

“It's an honour to meet you, Mr. Wright. This is on the house. Enjoy to your hearts content, the Flying Spaghetti Master's speciality, our menma!”

“Th... Thank you very much...”

“So? The reason that brings you way out here is...”

Ramon's voice dropped suddenly, as he gained a serious expression.

“Yesterday's incident?”

“That's right.”

I was relieved.

After making no progress as the airport and Edgeworth's cryptic warning, I was worried that this investigation wasn't going anywhere, but it seems like Ramon will talk to us.

Ramon shook his head.

“Apollo didn't do it. There's no way a straight arrow like him would kill anyone!”

“Of course, I believe in him too. But...”

Ramon had an overwhelming energy, but it's time I got serious.

I cut straight to the question.

“Are you sure you never doubted Apollo at all?”

Ramon twitched in response to my words.

“Apollo told me. Right after the incident occurred, you asked him 'Why would you'. Which is to say you suspected him, right?”

“At the time... yeah, I thought so. But that's 'cause I saw it. I saw the ice pick drop from his hands. The airport staff were restraining him. And so those words just slipped out...”

Ramon averted his eyes in frustration.

“... I regret it now. When I thought about it calmly it seemed ridiculous. Apollo would never kill a person. I... need to apologise to him.”

... Good to hear. Ramon does believe in Apollo. He ran his mouth in the heat of the moment and regrets it.

“Can you recount everything you saw for us?”

Ramon lifted his head.

“I... didn't see the moment it happened. I parted ways with Apollo just before he entered the baggage check and had my back turned. It wasn't until the people from the departure gate rushed over and began shouting and trying to wake him. Someone pointed at Apollo and called him the culprit... so I came running over...”

Ramon furrowed his brow. I decided to bring up something that had been bothering me.

“There's one thing I'd like to confirm.”

“... What is it?”

“I hear you interacted with the victim right before the incident occurred?”

Ramon gulped. I pressed for an answer.

“What was it you tried to discuss with Mr. Goodwin?”

“Nothing... It wasn't important.”

Ramon looked away.

“Mr. Goodwin is an old friend of my predecessor... that is to say, my grandpa. He's done a lot for us over the years with his connections. When I saw him at the airport, I thought I'd take the chance to give him my regards.”

According to Apollo, Ramon had grabbed Mr. Goodwin's arm with a grim expression... and Mr. Goodwin had shaken him off and kept walking. Doesn't sound like a friendly greeting to me.

I changed my angle of approach.

“Can you tell me more about the late Mr. Goodwin?”

“Eh...? Ah... Uh...”

“What kind of man was he? I've heard he's long since been a politician dedicated to the people of this city.”

“That's right. Mr. Goodwin was a politician who was admired by everyone.”

“So you wouldn't know of anyone who had harboured any ill will towards Mr. Goodwin?”

“Of course not! Nobody would want him dead!”

Ramon gave an unnaturally quick and definitive response.

“But someone did kill him and tried to pin the crime on Apollo. The true culprit must have had some kind of motive...”

“I don't know. I don't know anything about that!”

Ramon shouted to cut off the conversation as he added more menma to our bowls.

“Hey, Mr. Wright. Please help Apollo. I know he's innocent!”

“Of course, I believe in him. So regarding Mr. Goodwin...”

“I don't know, I've got nothing to say about him. I'm sorry, Mr. Wright!”

Once again he added more menma.

I'd rather have some decent testimony over mountains of menma...

It doesn't seem we'll get anything else out of Ramon.

We simply ate our menma in silence.

# Chapter 3. Seeking Further Evidence

“I ate too much menma, I don't feel good.”

Athena complained rubbing her stomach as we left the store. I feel the same. The Flying Spaghetti Master's menma is great, but eating too much of it has given me heartburn.

“We haven't got our hands on anything other than menma. Ramon seemed like he was hiding something though...”

“Did your ears pick anything up from him?”

“Hmm, he seems to be afraid of something... I think. I could feel some kind of unease in the tone of his voice.”

I felt that too. He seemed to become unnaturally fidgety when I brought up the topic of Mr. Goodwin.

Was there some kind of trouble between Ramon and Mr. Goodwin? I'll need to uncover the details.

“We should head to Mr. Goodwin's office next. I'd like to hear from his secretary and office staff.”

“Sounds like a plan.”

“The location of the office... is...”

I'd drawn a map with the address. I opened my bag to pull out the piece of paper out when something occurred.

I heard a lively voice.

“It's true! It was a totally awesome plane. You've never seen anything like it. It was like, a hundred times cooler than grandpa's plane!”

There were three young boys with backpacks talking as they walked. They were probably in... third or fourth grade. The boy in the middle was talking with great excitement.

The other two boys responded.

“No way~! Your grandpa's plane is awesome, Armen.”

“That's right. There's no way there's a plane cooler than his.”

“I thought so too until I saw it. It was pure black, super fast... I used to think grandpa's plane was the best in the whole world, but it couldn't stack up against that.”

The boy noticed us in front of the store and stopped talking to smile at us.

“Are you customers, pops? Thanks for your patronage~ Our ramen is great, right?”

“Eh...? Ah, you live here?”

“Yeah! Come again soon, we'll be sure to serve up plenty of our special menma!”

The boy gave us a wink. It was practised like a pop idol's wink.

His two friends said "Bye, Armen" and "See ya tomorrow" as they walked away while waving. Armen opened the door to the shop with vigour and called out "I'm back~" as he went inside.

Athena whispered to me after the door closed.

"Do you think... Ramon has a son... Or his little brother, perhaps?"

"Yeah, Apollo told me Ramon has a little brother. If I recall, their parents passed away and they live together with their grandfather."

"Their grandfather... That's the 'predecessor' Ramon mentioned."

We left the store and followed the map I had drawn. The wind was strong as always.

"He said his grandpa has a plane. I was surprised to hear that."

"Yeah, me too. I didn't think anyone could buy their own airplane unless they're ridiculously wealthy..."

I hate to say it, but 'The Flying Spaghetti Master' didn't really look like it was that popular. That it made enough to buy a plane was beyond my expectations.

Athena seemed to have the same opinion.

"There's people out there who sink everything they have into their hobbies. Like audiophiles who go into debt just to buy super high fidelity stereos and stuff..."

"I suppose so."

"Or swimming maniacs who build a pool at home and don't even swim in it..."

"... I don't think that happens much."

"Ramon's grandfather is probably that type of guy. The store is falling apart, but he has the plane of his dreams... a real romanticist!"

Athena held her hands together with a big smile.

Come to think of it, there were a lot of pictures of aircraft inside the shop. I suppose he's an aviation maniac through and through. I mean, he even called the shop 'The Flying Spaghetti Master'.

"I'd like to meet this grandfather if possible. Ramon told us that he's an old friend of Mr. Goodwin after all."

"I wonder if he's out today? We should've asked Ramon more about his grandpa."

"I'm not sure he was really in the mood to talk about it though..."

Anyway, our next destination was Mr. Goodwin's office. I looked at the sheet of paper with the map to check the location one more time.

"Hmm... So we turn left at the traffic lights up here..."

Then it happened.

A particularly fierce gust of wind took the paper from my hands.

“Ah, crap!”

The paper fluttered in the wind. Athena and I chased it in a panic.

“Hold iiiit.”

Athena raised her voice, but the paper didn't listen. The wind carried it at tremendous speed.

There's no way we can...

Suddenly, the paper vanished from view.

“... Eh?”

We stopped in our tracks.

The paper had been caught by a thin old man. He gripped a butterfly net with both hands. He swung his katana... I mean, butterfly net, as if he were a samurai in a period drama, splendidly catching the paper.



The old man slowly lifted the net from the ground and removed the sheet of paper from it.

We ran over to thank him.

“Thank you so much. That memo is ours. The wind took it out of my hands...”

“GWAAAAAAH!”

The old man suddenly let out a strange yell. Athena and I were taken aback.

For a small thin old man... that's quite a noise...

“Why you darn litterbugs! In the name of the sky, I will punish you!”

The old man swung his butterfly net with a dangerous look in his eye. Despite the fact that a net is unlikely to give you lasting injuries even if you are hit with it... his intensity was intimidating.

“I-I'm sorry. We didn't actually mean to drop it...”

“Whether you meant to or not, littering is littering! Litterbugs like yourselves just toss your trash anywhere and it gets blown into the sea! Which means it's scoundrels like who perform the heinous crime of polluting our beautiful oceans!”

“Sorry...”

It wasn't on purpose, but I can't deny that it was my fault. I lowered my head in apology.

— However, the absolutely fearless Athena spoke up with a bright curiosity on her face.

“Are there bugs around here?”

“... What?”

“You've got a really nice butterfly net, so I was wondering if there were any rare specimens of butterfly or grasshopper around here...”

“GWAAAAAH!”

That fierce noise once again. We were taken aback.

“This net ain't for catching bugs! It's to nicely catch the litter scattered about by dirty litterbugs like yourselves!”

“R-Right...”

“No matter how much trash you scoundrels toss, I'll nicely catch it all! You won't escape the judgement of my net!”

I guess this city has a litter problem. Well, I suppose with such strong winds all kinds of things blow about. I've got to commend this old guy for catching everything that flies by in his net...

The old man thrust the paper back at me.

“It's downright deplorable. As long as I, Alden Berger, am still alive and kicking, you litterbugs won't get away with your deeds!”

“... Berger?”

So this old man is...

But before I could confirm it with him, the old man noticed something. He saw the address I had written down.

“What? Goodwin's office? You're in cahoots with that corrupt politician then!”

“Eh? Corrupt, you say...”

“The man is a fraud preying on this town! Hmph, so you're his underlings, eh? It figures you'd be tossing your trash about the place!”

This is a huge misunderstanding.

But we've finally found someone willing to talk about Mr. Goodwin. And one who completely turns his good image on its head. This is potentially controversial testimony. It could be really helpful to our case.

“Are you by any chance the former proprietor of The Flying Spaghetti Master?”

The old man gave me a sharp glare as I made my enquiry.

“So what if I am!? I may have handed the business over to my grandson, but The Flying Spaghetti Master is my castle! We ain't serving our menma to underlings of that Goodwin fella!”

“You're mistaken. We're here to investigate yesterday's incident.”

“Police? I ain't got anything to say to you. Goodwin got what was coming to him!”

“I'd like to hear more about that. What I've heard indicates the public opinion on Mr. Goodwin was fairly positive and he was a respectable politician working for the people...”

“Nothing is respectable about his politics! I've known him since we were in grade school! The

world wouldn't be able to stand having another filthy cheat like him. He's the king of cheaters!"

"Could we have some specifics..."

"It's a long story. In first grade he won a prize by submitting an essay written by his tutor. In second grade, he knocked over the fish tank in our classroom and blamed me for it. In third grade, on the day of our big clean up he feigned illness to take the day off. Then in fourth grade..."

"Ah... Um... I'm more interested in his political career than his childhood misdeeds..."

"There's plenty more! There's no end to that man's misdeeds!"

"Gramps!"

Suddenly a loud voice echoed and the old man cut himself off.

It was Ramon Berger. He was out of breath having run all the way here.

"Hm? Ramon? You've abandoned the shop..."

"There's no customers anyway. I heard from the neighbours that you were rampaging in the middle of the road shouting."

"That's total codswallop! I ain't rampaging! In the name of the sky, I'm dishing out punishment...!"

"Stop shouting! It's because of your behaviour that we don't get any customers..."

Ramon grabbed his grandfather's hand and bowed his head to us.

"Sorry, Mr. Wright. It seems my predecessor has been causing you trouble."

"He was no trouble at all. In fact, Alden had some interesting things to say..."

"... I'm sorry. We're leaving."

Ramon pulled his grandfather along by the hand. Alden was oddly compliant with his grandson's actions.

"... There he goes. Our valuable source of information."

Athena lamented as she watched the two of them depart.

"Seems like a cranky old coot. I'm not sure I'd feel safe flying with such a short tempered pilot."

That's right, Armen had mentioned his grandpa's plane. Which means that Alden has his own personal aircraft.

"I wouldn't want to ride a plane with him... That aside, he really seems to hate Mr. Goodwin."

"Sounds like Mr. Goodwin was a real problem child in school. Do you think he turned over a new leaf and became a respectable adult?"

"I don't know. Alden seems to believe his political career was built on fraud and deceit..."

"But he's the only one who seems to be of that opinion. Everyone else is singing his praises."

"... Well, maybe we should just head to his office."

I held on to the paper tight to make sure we didn't lose it a second time as we went to Goodwin's office.

[Same Day, 4:00 PM: Truman Goodwin's office]

Mr. Goodwin's office was on the main street not far from the station. It was the heart of this city. The building his office was in was old fashioned and made of stone. The elevator was also old style.

"Pretty simple for a politician's office."

Athena murmured. It wasn't what I was expecting either. He'd been a politician for many years, I was expecting something a little more grandiose.

When I knocked the door the response "Come in." came from inside.

"Excuse us."

I opened the door. The room wasn't particularly vast and there were desks and cabinets lined up neatly. Beyond that was a simple lounge suite.

There was a single man in the room. He was sat at a desk doing some kind of work, but stood up when he saw us.

He was wearing a sharp looking suit and metal framed glasses. His age was probably somewhere around 30. He seemed like a highly capable intellectual.

"Who might you be? I'm sure you've heard, but Mr. Goodwin is..."

"I hate to suddenly intrude. My name is Phoenix Wright, I'm a defence attorney."

"Attorney...? Regarding the incident then..."

"That's right. I'm representing the suspect, Apollo Justice."

The man nodded and offered his business card.



"I'm Terry Secker, I served as Mr. Goodwin's secretary. I'm still in shock that such an unbelievable incident happened. I've been so busy with the news coverage and people phoning in their sympathies... I haven't had a moment to pause."

"Sorry to interrupt while you're busy. We were hoping we could get some details about the incident from you."

"Of course."

Mr. Secker guided us to the sofa.

As he served us tea, I nonchalantly surveyed the office.

The desks and cabinets were incredibly tidy. It's a far cry from our office which has stuff all over the place,

magic props, a piano, fake food, etcetera.

On the wall was one of Mr. Goodwin's posters and a schedule. Most of the schedule was packed to the brim, but the rest was all blank after the words 'Business Trip' written for yesterday.

The photo on the poster showed him in the peak of health. He was apparently 67 when he died, but he looks a lot younger. The slogan 'Bringing a dazzling white shine to all!' was written beneath his smiling face.

"Sounds more like a slogan for a washing detergent than a politician."

Athena whispered. She only meant for me to hear, but unfortunately Mr. Secker overheard her as he brought the tea.

"Washing detergent, eh? How interesting."

Mr. Secker spoke with a smile as Athena blushed in embarrassment.

"S-sorry..."

"No, not at all. I'm sure the boss would be overjoyed to hear such a comparison. A politician as clean as washing detergent – That was the boss's style."

"I've heard he spent many years devoting himself to this city."

Mr. Secker lowered his head in a deep nod in response to me.

"Indeed... It's such a shame. He was a great politician adored by the entire public... Why did he have to go like this...?"

"The entire public? I've heard evidence to the contrary though."

I shot straight on the offensive. Mr. Secker made a doubtful enquiry.

"What do you mean by that?"

"I met someone who hates Mr. Goodwin with a passion. He made Mr. Goodwin out to be some kind of heartless monster."

"Who was it? Who would take such a ridiculously unfounded..."

I naturally didn't want to give away his name, but Mr. Secker seemed to clue in immediately.

"Ah, right. The old man from The Flying Spaghetti Master, Mr. Alden Berger, isn't it?"

"..."

"That's just Mr. Berger's idea of a joke. Try not to take him too seriously."

"A joke...?"

"He's got a sharp tongue. Despite what he says, Mr. Goodwin and Mr. Berger got along well. They've been best friends since before they even started school."

Best friends...? That's not the impression I got.

"When Mr. Berger's ramen shop was going through a rough patch, Mr. Goodwin lent a hand to help out. I'm sure he's mourning Mr. Goodwin's death in his own way. He's known to be quite the contrarian though, so he's not willing to be honest with himself."

“I see.”

I nodded.

“Why is it you think that Mr. Goodwin was killed? What motive did the killer have?”

“I’d like to know the answer myself.”

Mr. Secker looked straight at me.

“I have no idea why that young man – the suspect Mr. Justice, would hold murderous intent towards a fine politician like Mr. Goodwin. I was hoping you could explain it to me, Mr. Wright.”

“Apollo didn’t do...”

Athena burst out unable to contain herself, but I stopped her.

At this point, there was no denying that Apollo was the prime suspect. Nothing we say here will clear his suspicion.

This isn’t the place to prove Apollo’s innocence. The courtroom is.

Mr. Secker spoke with a polite smile.

“I’m afraid I’ve nothing else I can say. Apologies I couldn’t be of assistance.”

His phrasing was polite, but it was clear that ‘I’m busy, so get lost.’ was the true meaning behind his words. As expected of a politician’s secretary, he was quite good at conveying his intent without any words... I felt an odd kind of admiration for this skill.

“Sorry to intrude without any warning.”

“Not at all. I hope the details come to light in court. When I visit his grave, I’d like for the boss to pass on with satisfaction.”

I signalled Athena with my eyes to keep her from saying anything and bowed.

In the end, we got nothing of any use in the vicinity of Seafield Airport.

Though a number of things still bug me. Mr. Goodwin’s reputation is unnaturally clean. Yet nobody was willing to say anything about his death. The only person who seems to know about Mr. Goodwin’s dark side is Alden. And perhaps Edgeworth, based on his attitude.

This case seems like it’s going to be complicated.

# Chapter 4. The Trial Finally Begins!

[March 14, 9:37 AM: District Court – Defendant Lobby No. 3]

**“THE DEFENCE IS READY, YOUR HONOR!”**

Trucy shouted right in my face. I instinctively took a step back.

“Wh-what...?”

Trucy flipped her cape and spoke holding her silk hat.

“Vocal training, daddy. That's the first thing you say in a trial, right? 'The defence is ready, Your Honor.'”

“Yeah... Your point being...?”

“First impressions are important. Like with a magic act, you need a good trick to hook the audience in right at the start. Which is why you should do some vocal training.”

“I'm fine, I don't need to do that.”

Come to think of it, Apollo did 'vocal training' every day. His natural speaking voice was loud enough that I don't really think it's necessary, but Apollo always did his vocal training with vigour.

“Let's do it, Mr. Wright! It's Apollo's trial, so we should do things Apollo's way!”

Athena shouted with a pumped up expression.

“I'll go first. **THE DEFENCE IS REEEAAAADY, YOUR HONOOOOOR–!**”

“Th-that's a little too loud, Athena.”

“Come on, do it with me, Mr. Wright!”

“I'll do it too! Here we go!”

**“THE DEFEEEENCE IS REEEAAAADY, YOOOOUR HONOOOOOR–!”**

... Good grief.

Their loud voices were giving me a headache, but their passion got through to me. They were also desperate to win an aquittal for Apollo.

“Join us, Mr. Wright...”

“No, I'll be fine without it. I'm ready to go without practice.”

I stated matter of factly as Trucy stared at me blankly.

“It's gives us hope, daddy. I feel like at this rate we'll get the aquittal we deserve!”

Hope...? About 90% of my hopes are all held together by bluffs...

I'll be fine. I've gotten out of tighter spots than this before.

I just need to believe in my client to the bitter end and go in all guns blazing.

[Same Day, 10:00 AM: District Court – Courtroom No. 3]

The trial is finally beginning.

Naturally, the judge is sitting at the highest point in the courtroom. The prosecution and defence take up positions on opposite sides of the courtroom.

The prosecution tries to prove the defendant's guilt. While the defence pleads for the defendant's innocence. Both parties present evidence and witnesses and point out contradictions in each other's arguments in order to reach the truth. Then the final verdict is handed down by the judge.

Normally the judge would go straight into the court proceedings, but today he made a small preface with an odd expression.

“Oh my, what a surprise. I never thought that the attorney Mr. Justice would be on trial...”

I spoke with my chest puffed.

“It is possible for anyone to become a suspect in a crime. Even the innocent. That is why we have trials to determine the truth.”

I thought I'd made a pretty cool statement there – But an even cooler line came from the prosecution.

“Achtung, baby. Only the sweet melody known as truth can produce a clear sound without any distortion.”

“Oho?”

The judge widened his eyes as he looked at the prosecution.

“A clear... sound, you say? You speak as if it were a piece of music.”

“Of course. I can't imagine having a trial with no music.”

The prosecutor closed his eyes as he played some riffs on an air guitar.

No, I don't think a trial requires music... is the response I'd like to give right now, if not for all the swooning in the gallery. By the way, the viewing gallery is completely filled with women today.

The prosecution is being represented by Prosecutor Klavier Gavin today. He's a tough opponent.

At first glance, you'd think Prosecutor Gavin was a rock star rather than a prosecutor. Anyway, he's showy, flashy and good looking. In fact until recently he was both a prosecutor and musician as the head of the band 'The Gavingers', but due to certain circumstances the band has since been disbanded. Now he's a full time prosecutor. However his love and passion for music still seems to be going strong.

When he's prosecuting a case, his female fans turn up in droves. While the gallery's reactions have no influence on the verdict, it does make things harder.

“Don't let the fangirls bother you, Mr. Wright!”

Athena encouraged me with clenched fists. Athena was at the defence bench with me as my



assistant.

“Your looks don't matter in court. Neither does your musical ability. It's the thought that counts!”

... Yeah, I'm not sure that's quite right.

The judge was slightly taken aback having little familiarity with rock, but he regained his composure and solemnly banged his gavel.

“Court is now in session for the trial of Apollo Justice.”

“The defence is ready, Your Honor.”

“The prosecution is okay.”

“Prosecutor Gavin, you may give your opening statement.”

Prosecutor Gavin nodded and snapped his fingers.

“Okay, time to play the intro to this trial. The stage of the incident is the hand luggage checking area at Seafield Airport. The only ones lined up for inspection were the victim, Truman Goodwin, and the defendant, Apollo Justice. The defendant stabbed the victim with an ice pick and the victim shouted as he collapsed. The tip of the ice pick used as the weapon was covered in a lethal dose of poison.”

The judge gave a deep nod.

“Hmm... Sounds like a simple case.”

“That's right. And a simple melody needs a strong beat.”

“Beat... I see... What... do you mean by that?”

The judge didn't really have any understanding of musical terminology.

Prosecutor Gavin spoke.

“And so, I'll summon my first witness to provide the hot beat of testimony!”

... Just say that from the beginning. The judge finally regained his understanding.

“Ah, I see. Then summon the witness to the stand.”

The one who took the witness stand was the baggage inspection officer.

“My name is Gonzalo Sacco. I work as a hand luggage inspection officer at Seafield Airport.”

The inspection officer began his testimony in the same apathetic lifeless way as anything else.

The judge made an enquiry.

“So, an inspection officer. That means you're the person who does a body check whenever the metal detector goes off... I always get caught up in those.”

... It seems the judge always forgets to remove his belongings.

“There's a number of positions among inspection officers. Like being in charge of the metal detector or looking at the contents of people's bags on the x-ray machine. My role is direct inspection.”

“Direct... inspection?”

“I open the passengers bags and confirm the contents with my own eyes.”

Prosecutor Gavin made his own elaboration.

“There were a number of inspection officers in the area, but Herr Sacco was the only one with sufficient proximity to witness the event. The other officers were all at their own posts and didn't get caught up in the incident. Which is why we have Herr Sacco as our witness.”

“I see. Please tell us about what you saw.”

At the judge's encouragement, Mr. Sacco began to speak.

“I was behind the inspection counter like always, inspecting people's baggage. The only people on the other side of the counter were Mr. Goodwin and the defendant. All the other passengers had finished their inspection and were in the departure lobby. There were no issues with Mr. Goodwin's luggage, so I let him on ahead. The next moment, the defendant rushed in on Mr. Goodwin. Mr. Goodwin shouted 'Waah, stop!' and suddenly collapsed. I was surprised, so I came around the counter to assist Mr. Goodwin. The passengers



in the lobby rushed over to help him too... But Mr. Goodwin had been stabbed in the side and was bleeding. He'd passed out and was convulsing... We were too late."

The judge let out a deep sigh.

"For a politician who dedicated his life to the betterment of his city to meet such an end. It's such a shame."

"Indeed. For such a man of the people to have been killed... I'll never forgive the defendant."

The was Mr. Sacco spoke sounded somewhat forced. It may just be my imagination though...

No, my imagination isn't going to break his testimony. I need to gently press him in order to find some contradictions.

I went straight into the cross examination.

"My client told me that right after picking up the ice pick that had fallen at his feet, Mr. Goodwin collapsed and he tried to support him. Though your testimony paints a different picture."

"That's obviously because the defendant was lying."

"Did you see when the defendant picked up the ice pick?"

"I didn't. Which means it never happened."

... Hmm.

I believe that Apollo wouldn't lie to me about this. Which means... there's got to be something fishy about Mr. Sacco's testimony.

"Perhaps you were looking the other way or distracted by something else? As such, you missed the moment when he picked the ice pick?"

"Absolutely not."

Mr. Sacco denied it with a sneer.

"If I zoned out like that, I wouldn't be fit for the role of inspection officer. If I overlooked anything dangerous, it'd be a disaster. I have all five senses going at all times during my work. I wouldn't miss anything that happened right in front of me."

... Well, I can't begrudge his work ethic... But if he's telling the truth, it's downright unnatural that he didn't see Apollo pick up the ice pick...

Athena whispered to me.

"Mr. Wright, isn't there something odd about his testimony there? There's just one thing that doesn't add up..."

"Yeah, I noticed too."

I nodded and looked to Mr. Sacco.

"Mr. Sacco, may you describe what you saw in detail once again?"

"Again? Why? No matter how many times I say it, my story won't change."

"Indulge me."

Mr. Sacco begrudgingly went over his testimony again.

"I clearly saw the defendant attack Mr. Goodwin. Mr. Goodwin shouted 'Woah, that hurt!' and collapsed..."

"Objection!"

I cut the testimony off. Mr. Sacco clammed up in shock.

"You previously stated that Mr. Goodwin shouted 'Waah, stop!'. But this time you claimed he shouted 'Woah, that hurt!'. So which one is it?"

"Eh... Uh... W-well... That's..."

Mr. Sacco was beginning to lose his cool. Alright, I've got a reaction.

"I made a mistake earlier. That's right, I remember clearly now. Mr. Goodwin shouted 'Woah, that hurt!' before he fell."

"Is that so? According to the defendant, 'Woah, what are you doing?' is what Mr. Goodwin shouted."

"... Eh..."

Mr. Sacco's demeanour changed completely from his previous lifelessness. He had lost his cool and his gestures became exaggerated.

"That's right. Yeah, that was it. I just didn't remember it clearly."

"Mr. Sacco. You told us with great confidence earlier that 'I have all five senses going at all times during my work'. If that is truly the case, why is your memory on what the victim shouted so vague? Could it be you really were zoned out at the time..."

"Ri-ridiculous! That's pure slandereer!"

Mr. Sacco shouted completely losing his composure as he pulled something yellow from his pocket.

"Yellow card! I-I'm penalising you for doubting my work ethic."

"But your memories are clearly a jumble."

"N-no. It's just that... Oh yeah, at the time Mr. Goodwin shouted, there was also a loud voice coming from the lobby. So I didn't hear him clearly."

"A loud voice in the lobby...?" Whose voice was it?"

"It wasn't one person. It was a bunch of people raising their voice at once. It was those voices that drowned out Mr. Goodwin's scream. That's why my memory of it is vague!"

"Why were people shouting in the lobby?"

"Because the shot went in obviously!"

Mr. Sacco shouted, unable to contain himself. His eyes began to shine...

"The TV in the lobby was airing a soccer match! Neither team had made any progress and the game went into overtime at nil all. The opposing team were launching a fierce attack when they

countered! Using short passes, they overcame the enemy's powerful defence! Just when it seemed all hope was lost, they went in with a miraculous long shoot!"

As he shouted, Mr. Sacco was kicking his feet up in the air. It was like he was playing soccer right there.

"The moment after the ball entered the goal, the whistle signalling the end of the match rang out! Who wouldn't shout at the conclusion of such an intense match? Even I almost forgot I was supposed to be working and wanted to let out... a... shout..."

Mr. Sacco realised his fatal mistake. He went pale and huddled up.

I spoke nice and slow.

"It sounds like you were quite absorbed in watching the game."

"Eh... Ah... Uuugh..."

"From the way you were speaking, it sounds like you didn't only see the goal, you were watching the whole match."

"Ugh... Oof... Oooogh..."

"Which means you were blowing off your work to watch the TV in the lobby? It seems the only thing your five senses were focused on... were the soccer match!"

**"OW... OW... OWN GOOOAAL..."**

Mr. Sacco clutched his head and fell to his knees. He whispered his excuses in a frail voice.

"Soccer is my whole life... I've gotten caught up in matches and screwed up my job several times already... They said if I screwed up again I'd be fired... So I couldn't tell the truth..."

I turned to Prosecutor Gavin. I could practically hear his teeth grinding as he glared at me in frustration.

"It's quite clear that Mr. Sacco's testimony cannot be taken at face value. Which means we have to re-examine this case from scratch. Let's say that the defendant picked up an ice pick that had fallen on the floor, just as he claims. Let's see how the story changes."

I carefully built my provisional scenario.

"The true culprit approached the victim and swiftly stabbed him, dropping the ice pick used as the weapon on the floor. The defendant then innocently picked it up. At which point, the victim collapsed..."

"Objection!"

Prosecutor Gavin shouted sharply, having regained his composure.

"That's odd though. The victim screams and collapses several seconds after he was stabbed. Isn't that unlikely?"

True, that point is a mystery.

First the victim was stabbed, then Apollo picked up the weapon, then immediately after that the

victim collapsed... The order of events seems off.

Why is that? After thinking it through, I settled on a theory.

"The ice pick was coated in poison. The poison caused numbness at the moment the victim was stabbed, meaning he didn't feel anything at the time. But a few seconds later he finally realised that he had been stabbed..."

**"Objection!"**

An incredibly loud voice echoed through the courtroom. But what surprised me wasn't just how loud the voice was. But it came from an unexpected source.

"A... Apollo...!?"

Apollo's usual lively voice came from the defendant's seat.

I wasn't the only one dumbfounded.

The judge spoke with his eyes wide.

"Apollo. You're the defendant in this trial. Not an attorney."

"Of course, I know that. But Mr. Wright's theory is wrong."

Apollo spoke clearly as he stood up.

... Apollo... What are you doing...?

The judge shook his head with a fierce expression.

"The defendant isn't permitted to outbursts like this. If you have something to say then you should consult your attorney first."

"I don't mind."

The one who said this was Prosecutor Gavin.

He continued, looking at Apollo with an amused expression.

"The only thing we're after here is the truth. I think we should be willing to hear Herr Forehead out."

Herr Forehead is Prosecutor Gavin's nickname for Apollo. Apollo does have quite a forehead, so it's fitting.

"... I suppose so. If the prosecutor has no objections... then I'll let it slide."

The judge had a blank stare as he granted Apollo permission to speak.

Unlike other prosecutors, Prosecutor Gavin puts great importance on 'uncovering the truth'.

For many prosecutors, the truth is merely a secondary concern to getting a guilty verdict.

Their main concern is improving their reputation at the prosecutor's office.

But Prosecutor Gavin is different. He has a pure and simple desire to uncover the truth. I admire the way he clings to having justice served, even when it involves testimony detrimental to the prosecution's case.

But that's precisely what makes him a fierce opponent... His single minded desire for the truth,

while admirable, means that he never lets up in his pursuit.

Apollo confidently took the witness stand.

"Mr. Wright's theory is wrong. After all, I was standing right behind the victim the whole time. I can confirm that nobody else came near him at that time."

The judge spoke with a look of disbelief.

"So basically, no one other than yourself had an opportunity to commit the crime... Are you admitting your guilt?"

"No!"

Apollo have his head a big shake.

"I'm not the culprit. I can attest to that. However, no other people approached the victim. I can attest to that as well."

"But that... sounds like a contradiction..."

The judge spoke to Prosecutor Gavin with bewilderment.

"Anyway, I think we should hear Herr Forehead's testimony in full. If he tells any lies to hide his guilt, I'll uncover them no matter what."

"Alright, understood. If you could give us your testimony, Herr Forehead."

The name caught on with the judge.

After requesting "Please don't call me Herr Forehead.", Apollo began his testimony.

"I was lined up behind Mr. Goodwin so I could have my hand luggage checked. Just as I placed the bag I was taking on board on the counter, something fell down by my feet. I picked it up without thinking. I thought the man in front of me – Mr. Goodwin had dropped it. The next moment, Mr. Goodwin turned around and shouted 'Woah! What are you doing!?' before collapsing. I was shocked and tried to support his fall, but I underestimated his force and fell on my butt. The inspection officer behind the counter and people from the departure lobby ran over to help Mr. Goodwin. People started to look at me and shout 'He's the culprit, apprehend him' and so I was arrested."

... The same story I heard at the detention center.

The judge spoke.

"No matter how I look at it, you seem to be the culprit."

"I'm not. All I did was pick up a fallen ice pick and try to support Mr. Goodwin."

"However... There's no-one else other than yourself who could have stabbed him, is there...?"

The judge cocked his head.

... There's just one suspect. One person who could've gotten close enough to touch the victim.

*He* could've stabbed the victim at that specific time...

It would allow me to confirm the theory 'the poison caused numbness at the moment the victim was stabbed, meaning he didn't feel anything at the time' which I suggested earlier.

Despite Apollo's claim that 'nobody else came near him at that time', it's only natural he wouldn't be willing to suspect a friend.

If I cast suspicion on *him*, I may trample over Apollo's friendship.

But – My only option is to seek out the truth.

"Your Honor. Before the defendant picked up the ice pick, there was one person who had opportunity to stab the victim."

Apollo's expression stiffened as I spoke.

The judge enquired.

"Oho? And who might that be?"

"There was someone who spoke to the victim before he went to the hand luggage inspection station. That person may have used a hidden weapon to stab the victim."

"Nonsense!"

Prosecutor Gavin responded.

"So the victim just kept walking oblivious and happened to collapse while his bag was being examined? Nobody could be that oblivious to such an injury."

"It's possible."

The judge stated.

"Why, just exercising has me feeling muscle cramps three days later."

... Well, the judge is getting pretty old...

I shook my head.

"This isn't like a muscle cramp. Under normal circumstances, anyone would immediately realise when they've been stabbed. But Mr. Goodwin's case is special."

"Special... How so?"

"The tip of the weapon was coated with poison!"

I stated forcefully.

"The poison may have numbed Mr. Goodwin's sense of pain. Meaning he wouldn't have noticed that he had been stabbed. He went to the hand luggage inspection station as if nothing had happened, and when he finally noticed he shouted 'What are you doing?' and collapsed!"

"In... Incredible!"

The judge raised his voice. It seemed as if the judge accepted my theory, but...

Prosecutor Gavin shut me down immediately.

"Ain't possible, dude."

"Why not? If the poison acted upon his nerves, it's entirely possible that..."

"Just look at the results of the poison's analysis. It's the kind of deadly poison that would kill a man before he even has the chance to go numb!"

... Huh.

Nobody filled me in on that...

"The victim would be dead within a few seconds of the poison entering the body. It takes one second to begin entering fits and lose the ability to speak. It takes two seconds to stop breathing. Three seconds and their heart stops. That's the kind of poison we're dealing with."

The judge trembled.

"How horrifying!"

"Yeah, that's right. The suggestion that after being stabbed with the ice pick, Herr Goodwin was able to walk several steps to the hand luggage examination before collapsing... It's an impossible scenario!"

"Wh... Whaaaaaaaaaaaaaa...aat!?"

I let out a pathetic scream.

What a predicament.

My theory that Ramon could have been the culprit crumbled immediately.

The theory I had put all my deduction into was worthless...

Prosecutor Gavin closed his eyes as he spoke.

"I was planning to tell you earlier when you first offered the theory that 'the poison numbed his sense of pain'. But Herr Forehead cut in with his 'Objection', robbing me of the chance. I apologise for the wasted time."

He coolly played his air guitar... Ugh... He pisses me off.

Athena whispered to me as I wallowed.

"Mr. Wright. I just remembered something."

Still reeling from the shock, I looked to Athena with hollow eyes.

"... You remembered something? What is it..."

"The counter is to the right of the passengers."

Yeah... That's true.

"That's right. So what?"

"Apollo was placing his bag on the counter to his right. Which means he was most likely holding the bag with his right hand. So when he picked up the fallen item..."

"... Ah, I get it!"

I felt like a ray of sunshine had broken through the clouds in my heart.

That's our Athena. She picks up on the fine details.

I raised my hand and sought permission to make a statement.



“Defendant. Which hand did you pick up the ice pick with?”

“... Eh?”

Apollo gave a clear answer, despite his bewildered expression.

“My left hand. I had my bag in my right hand, so I used my left hand to pick it up.”

“I suggest we take a look at the autopsy report.”

I looked at the document in my hand.

“It says the victim was 'stabbed on his left side'. But if the victim was stabbed the moment he turned around, then this doesn't make any sense!”

The defendant – Apollo, had picked up the ice pick with his left hand.

If he were to stab the victim from his position, the wound would be on the right side.

“We only have the defendant's claim that the ice pick was in his left hand. Is there any proof it was in his left hand?”

“Prosecutor Gavin, take a look at the analysis on the weapon.”

I spoke quietly.

“The only fingerprints found on the ice pick were from the defendant's left hand.”

“... Eh... Ah!”

Prosecutor Gavin's calm expression twisted.

... Alright.

Thanks to Athena's nice assist, we've won back a few points.

However, Prosecutor Gavin immediately began his rebuttal.

“A trivial matter. It would indeed be strange for the wound to be on his left side if stabbed head on, but it was all quite sudden. It's possible the victim was stabbed before he fully turned around. Which means there's nothing strange about his wound being on the left.”

I gave a composed nod.

“I'll concede that's possible. But there's also another possibility in the mix.”

“... Another possibility? And what might that be?”

“Nobody witnessed the victim's position the moment he was stabbed. Therefore—”

I paused before continuing.

“It's possible that at the time the victim had not yet been stabbed!”

My words caused a great commotion in the courtroom.

The judge, Prosecutor Gavin and even Apollo looked dumbfounded.

But I had confidence.

When the victim shouted and collapsed, only Apollo was beside him. And I know Apollo isn't the killer.

Ramon seemed the most suspicious, but with the effects of the poison known, he's not a viable

suspect.

Which means – this is the only path that makes sense. Despite how ridiculous it may seem.

The judge spoke.

“The victim wasn't stabbed, you say? But he was found dead from a stab wound!”

“The ice pick the defendant picked up isn't the real murder weapon. It was a dummy prepared by the culprit. The real stabbing occurred afterwards. When the other people came running over to try and wake him!”

Silence suddenly enveloped the court.

A silence which was broken by the judge's voice.

“... What is the meaning of this?”

“Please look at the autopsy report. The wound wasn't very deep, not something that would typically be fatal. What killed the victim was a poison that acts within a matter of seconds. Which means...”

I slammed the defence bench as I raised my voice.

“There was no need to seriously wound the victim to kill him. The slightest scratch... even from something as small as a needle, would kill him if the tip was covered in poison. A weapon that small could easily be hidden within someone's sleeve. So while they were pretending to try and rouse the victim, it would've been possible to stab him with a poisoned needle...”

“Come on, you're not serious are you!?”

Prosecutor Gavin laughed.

“Isn't that just a little far fetched? Listen up, the victim shouted and collapsed. That was before anyone ran over to him. Isn't it obvious to think he's already been stabbed?”

“Not at all.”

I shook my head.

“Recall Mr. Sacco's testimony, a spectacular goal had just been scored in the soccer match being broadcast on TV. Mr. Goodwin shouting 'What are you doing?' wasn't related to him being stabbed. He instinctively shouted in response to the match ending goal. It's quite likely that...”

I extended my hand out in front of myself, pointing at the prosecution.

“He was a fan of the losing team!”

The gallery erupted. I puffed up with pride.

... I've got great confidence in my ability to bluff my way through a trial.

If I show any nervousness, I'm sunk.

“Ridiculous. Then how do you explain how he collapsed?”

“His favourite team just suffered a horrible loss. The sheer shock made him feel faint.”

“Good grief, are you actually serious?”

Prosecutor Gavin shook his head.

“Then tell me. What was Herr Goodwin's catch phrase?”

“... Catch phrase...?”

Athena whispered to me as I was thinking.

“You know, Mr. Wright. That detergent slogan!”

“Ah, yeah. I believe it was 'Bringing a dazzling white shine to all!'...”

“Yeah, that's true. But there's a second one as well. 'Great health for a long life!'”

... Eh. What the heck?

Prosecutor Gavin laughed triumphantly.

“It's a phrase well known by the people of Seafield city. The victim Herr Goodwin was the picture of great health. The fact he didn't have any health issues despite being 67 years old was one of his appealing points. Image is very important for politicians. It's ridiculous to suggest that a man in such peak condition would collapse over the result of a soccer match!”

... It was a solid statement... But I couldn't afford to back down.

“The victim was in good health... I'll acknowledge that. But even healthy people can feel run down if they're short on sleep or something. The shock of his favourite team losing may have hit Mr. Goodwin when he wasn't feeling his best leading to his collapse!”

“Objection! So on the day that Herr Goodwin just happens to collapse due to feeling under the weather, a person who runs over to assist him just happens to stab him with a preprepared poison needle? Sheer nonsense!”

Prosecutor Gavin made a glamorous gesture with one hand. His fangirls in the gallery all sighed.

“Are you forgetting the rules of the airport?”

“... Eh?”

“Don't get it? All the people who came running over after noticing something was wrong were in the departure lobby. Which means that all of them had gone through the metal detector.”

“Eh.... Ah!”

I turned pale as I realised my oversight.

“The killer hid a needle up their sleeve? Impossible. No matter how small a metallic object is, the metal detector would pick it up. In other words – it's quite clear the people in the departure lobby could not have concealed weapons. It was impossible for them to commit the crime!”

Ugh... Uwaaargh...

I screwed up. I can't believe I missed something so obvious.

It's just as Prosecutor Gavin said. All the people in the lobby had already gone through the metal detector. No matter how small the needle, the metal detector would have reacted.

Which means they couldn't have had a concealed weapon. This could be decisive.

Nobody other than Apollo could have possessed a weapon...

N-No. I can't give up yet. Think... I have to think. Is there any way to have carried the weapon without setting off the metal detector?

Maybe it was hidden inside the cloth... Or the power to the metal detector was cut...

No, that doesn't work. The machine wouldn't be tricked by having it concealed that way. And they'd notice immediately if the power had been cut.

The judge cut in on my silence.

"... Have you no rebuttal? Then it seems we have reached our conclusion. All the passengers in the lobby had been checked by the metal detector and had no hidden weapons. Which means only the defendant was capable of committing this crime..."

"Hold it!"

I squeezed out my voice. I can't end it here. Apollo couldn't possibly be guilty. Prosecutor Gavin stared at me intently.

His eyes seemed as if they wanted me to come up with a counterargument.

But no matter how hard I think, I can't come up with a way to carry metal through the metal detector without it being discovered.

It's times like these... I need to turn my thinking around. I'm not trying to think of how to fool the metal detector. I'm thinking of a way to pass through the metal detector without giving up the weapon...!

At that moment I had an idea strike like lightning.

I turned and shouted at the judge about to bring down his gavel.

"The real weapon wasn't metallic. A sharp item made of plastic or wood dipped in the poison could have been the weapon!"

Prosecutor Gavin looked at me with amusement.

"Well, you're still clinging on. As far as my investigation went, there didn't seem to be anyone with suspicious objects like that."

"Not quite."

A certain person's appearance came to mind. I leant forward as I spoke.

"There was someone among the passengers who had something that could be used as a weapon!"

"... What? Who is it?"

Prosecutor Gavin furrowed his brow.

Athena seemed to recall as well. "Ah, her...!" she whispered as she looked at me.

I stood proudly.

"A woman named Ms. Temple. The defence requests her testimony!"

# Chapter 5. Contradictions Exposed

Ms. Temple. The woman Athena and I had met when we were investigating the airport. The large words 'Temple Style Master' written on her suitcase left quite an impression.

Speaking of leaving an impression, there's one other thing.

Her hair was tied with some rather large Japanese hair ornaments. They were clearly made of wood and quite sharp at their point. Sufficient enough as a weapon... I lifted my head, having found a breakthrough.

But Prosecutor Gavin bashed down my elation with ease.

"Ah, Fraulein Temple? No need for the defence to request her. We've already got her waiting in the prosecution lobby. As one of the ones who came to the victim's assistance, we figured her testimony would be important."

... What.

Seriously... They've already got her lined up? The prosecution is always a step ahead of me.

"Nice timing. Let's summon her to the stand."

Prosecutor Gavin snapped his fingers. And on cue the courtroom doors opened to admit that woman – Ms. Temple.

... She seemed far more dolled up than necessary. Her kimono sash shone and her hair's volume seemed to be five times what it was at the airport. Speaking of her hair, it still had those ornaments.

"I am greatly honoured to be in your presence today. Hohoho. Ohohoho!"

She fanned herself with a folding fan as she laughed shrilly.

The judge timidly spoke up.

"Uh... So... You're our witness. Your name and occupation, please."

"My name is Flora Temple! I am the master of the Temple style of ikebana."

"Ikebana... That's Japanese flower arrangement then."

"Flowers are our primary focus, but we deal in many other things too. Tea, the koto, calligraphy, how to wear a kimono, everything from tarot card readings to karaoke, if my students want to learn it, then I'll teach it. Hooohoho!"

... Smells fishy to me.

Ms. Temple continued to shill her services, until the judge cut her off.

"Please testify as to what you saw on the day of the incident."

"Understood. As the master of the Temple style of testifying, I shall demonstrate the correct way to provide testimony."

... There's no such thing as a testifying style.

Anyway, with her Temple style etiquette (I guess?), she began her testimony.

"I was planning to catch a plane to go on vacation that day. After passing the hand luggage examination, I was in the departure lobby. There was a soccer match being broadcast on the television, due to my lack of interest in sports, I was instead reading a magazine. Suddenly the people watching the television let out a shout, simultaneously I also heard a loud voice shout 'Woah, what are you doing!?' coming from the hand luggage examination station. The people watching the television turned around and ran over asking 'What happened?', so I was wondering what had just occurred. Which is when I saw Mr. Goodwin collapsed in front of the hand luggage examination counter! His secretary Mr. Secker was cradling him saying 'Pull yourself together'. I was also going to try and assist him, when I noticed his shirt was covered in blood! In my panic, I screamed something, I don't recall my exact words though."

Ms. Temple, well aware that Prosecutor Gavin and the judge were hanging on her every word, rattled on as if reciting a poem.

Athena whispered to me.

"The Temple style of testifying sure is long winded..."

"Shh. She'll hear you."

With the testimony finished for now, Prosecutor Gavin asked a question.

"Do you recall anything specific regarding the defendant?"

Ms. Temple's face reddened, and she pulled out a compact case to fix up her make up as she answered.

"Um, the gentleman with the horned haircut, yes? He appeared to try and support the victim before falling on his buttocks. I clearly saw him holding a bloodstained ice pick in one hand though!"

"Please tell us more about Mr. Goodwin's condition."

"He was unconscious with his eyes rolled back. He had a number of convulsions before he eventually became still and ceased breathing... it was quite terrifying!"

The judge nodded.

"We have a clear picture now. Defence, you may begin the cross examination."

I looked at Ms. Temple. Not at her face, but at the ornaments in her hair.

"Ms. Temple. Were you wearing those hair ornaments on the day of the incident?"

"Eh? My kanzashi? Ah yes, you've got quite a good eye!"

Ms. Temple laughed cheerfully. I think there's a misunderstanding here...

"These kanzashi are a luxury item made from a 3000 year old ebony tree. These magnificent kanzashi were made over a period of ten years by a legendary craftsman and have a value similar to

that of a luxury automobile. But if you want them that badly, I am willing to part with them. For the special price of a mere \$10,000..."

"Were you wearing them on the day of the incident?"

I cut off Ms. Temple's sales pitch.

Ms. Temple answered with a disapproving glare.

"Of course I was. I don't feel comfortable without wearing these luxury kanzashi."

"May I take a look at them?"

"You want to take a look? You should have said so in the first place."

I walked over to the witness stand. Ms. Temple removed her kanzashi and handed it to me.

"Take a good look and the value of these kanzashi will be obvious. You'd have to be blind not to notice. After all, a master craftsman spent 30 years working on these ultra high quality..."

The amount of time it took to make them just became longer, but I don't care about that.

I took a look at the pointed end of the kanzashi. They're sharp, not not as sharp as the ice pick. I doubt they'd break someone's skin. Besides, Mr. Goodwin was stabbed through his shirt as well.

"Well? You think those wooden kanzashi could kill a man?"

Prosecutor Gavin asked with amusement. Unfortunately, I could only shake my head.

Ms. Temple spoke.

"Kill someone with a kanzashi? What do you mean? Oh my, surely you don't suspect me, do you?"

I thought she was going to get mad, but instead she laughed as she fanned herself.

"That's quite the joke! Why on earth would I want to kill Mr. Goodwin? He was such a fine politician!"

I had no option but to return her kanzashi to her.

"Was there anyone other than yourself and Mr. Secker who came in contact with Mr. Goodwin after he collapsed?"

"Come to think if it, one of the passengers was a doctor. He administered some first aid. Not that it was any use in the end."

Prosecutor Gavin added to the statement.

"The doctor's name was Herr Doktor Mendel. He was Herr Goodwin's GP."

"His GP? If his general practitioner was travelling with him, then does that mean Mr. Goodwin actually was battling an illness...?"

"Not at all. There was no ongoing medical treatments, the victim only ever went for annual check ups. And he wasn't travelling with Herr Goodwin either. He had no idea that they were going to be on the same flight."

So being on the same flight was a coincidence...?

Although he was one of the people to touch the fallen Mr. Goodwin. As a doctor, he would be well versed in poisons. I should check him out just in case.

Ms. Temple spoke.

"Oh my, are you suspecting the doctor? I can vouch for his innocence."

"Eh? How can you be sure of that?"

"Because everyone on the scene was subjected to a body search. The doctor, the other passengers and obviously myself possessed no potential weapons."

"A body search...?"

Seriously? New facts just keep on springing up...

Prosecutor Gavin explained.

"The police who arrived on the scene right after the murder performed body searches on everyone present. Initially they were thinking of forgoing the procedure as a suspect was already apprehended. But ultimately it was requested they perform body searches to act on the safe side."

"And what prompted that decision?"

"The secretary, Herr Secker."

The overly serious secretary...

"Going by the crime scene, suspicion would have obviously fallen on the defendant. Isn't it unnatural to request a body search under those circumstances?"

Prosecutor Gavin shook his head in response to my question.

"It never hurts to be sure. Herr Forehead apparently kept shouting 'It wasn't me, the true culprit is out there'. Taking those words into account, Herr Secker requested everyone be searched just in case."

And because Mr. Secker took Apollo's words into account, all other possible suspects have been eliminated...

I'll have to settle on using a flimsy excuse of a bluff now.

"Something could have been overlooked during the body searches..."

"No way."

Prosecutor Gavin flatly denied the possibility.

"The weapon would've been covered in blood and poison. You think the police could miss an item like that?"

"In the time it took the police to arrive, the true culprit may have disposed of the weapon somewhere..."

"How? You can't just leave a bloodstained poisoned weapon lying about, someone would find it."

"The prosecutor is right."

Ms. Temple had pulled out her compact case again, touched up her face, and smiled at Prosecutor Gavin.

“Besides until the police arrived, everyone was kept together in the waiting room. Nobody would have had any opportunity to dispose of a weapon.”

“By everyone, you mean all the passengers?”

“Indeed. Along with any staff who were in the vicinity. It was everyone present at the time of the incident.”

“Nobody left their seat to visit the bathroom or anything?”

“Not one. From the time we entered the waiting room to the arrival of the police was only about ten minutes. Nobody left the room during that period.”

“And before you ask, there was a full search done on the waiting room. Nothing odd surfaced.”

The more I hear, the worse Apollo's case becomes...

Am I looking at this from the wrong angle? Was the stabbing not done when the others ran over?

... No. That was the only time at which anyone other than Apollo could have stabbed him. I can't be wrong. Which means...

“What kind of state were all the people in the waiting room in?”

“They were all unsettled and noisy. I was the only one to maintain composure.”

“So you were calm then?”

“Of course. As the master of the Temple school, I maintain my composure at all times. Among the commotion in the waiting room, I was the only one who thought to notify the victim's family.”

“His... family?”

“His wife, of course. I thought to contact Mr. Goodwin's wife. However, I didn't know their home number so I wasn't able to make the call. I decided to ask the others in the room, but nobody else knew the number either...”

“Objection!”

I cut Ms. Temple off and took a deep breath.

Ms. Temple's testimony had been fairly solid up until now, but I'd just found a huge contradiction.

“Nobody? Not a single person knew Mr. Goodwin's home number?”

“That's right, your point being...?”

“That's odd though. His secretary Mr. Secker should have been there.”

Ms. Temple stared blankly for a moment in response to my assertion.

Then her face suddenly reddened to the point where it was noticeable even through her thick makeup.

“Oh, ooh, of course! Mr. Secker was in the waiting room!”

“And Mr. Goodwin's secretary didn't know his boss's phone number? Doesn't sound likely to me.”

“Th-th-that's, well, uh...!”

“Shouldn't it have been the secretary's responsibility to contact the family anyway? Are you saying a highly dedicated professional like Mr. Secker just sat around waiting for the police without contacting the victim's next of kin?”

“**Wh-what of it!?** It ain't like Mr. Secker is perfect at everything!”

Ms. Temple's behaviour took a 180 degree turn. Her mask of composure was crumbling to reveal her true face.

“The same Mr. Secker who was composed enough to request body searches for everyone was zoned out at this point?”

“Th-th-that's right. Mr. Secker was too wrapped up in his grief at losing Mr. Goodwin to be thinking clearly.”

“He was so wrapped up in his grief that he didn't think to call Mr. Goodwin's relatives? Despite being his secretary?”

“That's... Th... That's...”

“Tell us the truth, Ms. Temple.”

Ms. Temple fanned herself frantically as she sweated profusely, before finally hanging her head in resignation. Her previous bravado having faded like an illusion, she spoke in a deflated manner.

“Mr. Secker... never came to the waiting room...”

“Where was he?”

“I don't know... He didn't enter the room and wandered off... He said he needed some time alone. With that dreamy voice of his...”

– I could do without the swooning, madam.

“That's what he said... While staring directly into my eyes!!”

Ms. Temple covered her face as she squirmed about.

... I've suspected it for a little while... but Mr. Secker is apparently this woman's type.

But this has brought an important fact to light.

“At the time all related parties were gathered in the waiting room, Mr. Secker was somewhere on his own. He would have had the opportunity to dispose of any evidence!”

“Oh my, not quite.”

Ms. Temple returned to her previous tone of voice as she cut off my assertion.

“Mr. Secker wasn't the only one missing from the waiting room.”

“... What was that?”

“After Mr. Secker left, that doctor followed after him. Neither Mr. Secker or the doctor entered



the waiting room and returned shortly before the police arrived."

What... Another fact has come to light.

I raised my voice.

"By the doctor, you mean the victim's GP, Dr. Mendel? So his secretary and doctor were somewhere on their own away from other people... I think this is a very important detail!"

If they were in cahoots, they could've easily disposed of the weapon.

Alright... I'm finally catching a glimpse of the truth! It seems Prosecutor Gavin wasn't expecting this development. The cool smile he'd been floating until now had disappeared as he began to sweat, staring right at me.

"— Herr Secker and Herr Doktor Mendel were only on their own for about ten minutes before the police arrived, right? Do you really think it'd be possible to dispose of the weapon in such a short period, in an airport no less?"

"A magician could make a skyscraper vanish in the blink of an eye."

"Neither Herr Secker nor Herr Doktor Mendel are magicians."

“Either way, they had opportunity to destroy the evidence. I demand their testimony!”

Prosecutor Gavin was left speechless. The judge nodded.

“I acknowledge the defence's request. Until we can summon them to the stand, I believe this trial should be suspen—”

“No need for that.”

A calm voice spoke from the top seats of the gallery.

Standing there was none other than Mr. Secker.

So he's been in the stands listening this whole time?

The judge's eyes widened.

“Oho, you're here already? Then there's no need to summon you. Would you please come forward and provide your testimony?”

“Of course.”

Mr. Secker stood calmly at the witness stand as he adjusted his neck tie with one hand.

The judge spoke.

“You may begin your testimony. Your name and occupation please.”

“Terry Secker. I'm the secretary of the deceased, Mr. Goodwin.”

This is where I step up. I turned to face Mr. Secker.

“What were you and Dr. Mendel doing during the time all the other involved parties were in the waiting room?”

“We were talking on the observation deck. Dr. Mendel and I were both bewildered that such an unbelievable event had occurred. We were unable to settle down and talk in a room full of people so we went to the secluded observation deck.”

“What did you discuss?”

“Nothing in particular... We were both kind of out of it. Just small comments like 'What a terrible incident' and 'The culprit is a monster' were about all we could muster.”

“You didn't think of contacting Mr. Goodwin's family or other related parties at all?”

“I did, of course. But my phone had no reception on the observation deck. I didn't think about it again until after the police had completed their search.”

“You were with Dr. Mendel the whole time? Was there anyone else on the observation deck?”

“There was nobody else. Just the two of us.”

“In that case, the two of you...”

“The two of us could have been in cahoots disposing of the murder weapon... is that it? Good grief.”

Mr. Secker cut me off, shaking his head in disappointment.

“There's nothing on the observation deck, just an empty space. Where would I hide a weapon in

such a place?"

I thought about the observation deck's layout.

It was an open deck facing the tarmac.

It had no roof and was surrounded by a two meter fence to prevent anyone from falling.

Could the weapon have been thrown through the gaps in the fence...?

Prosecutor Gavin spoke as if reading my thoughts.

"If the weapon was thrown from the observation deck, it would've landed on the tarmac. The police performed thorough examinations of both those areas. Nothing out of the ordinary was found."

"But the weapon would've been a small needle-like object. And the police were searching a pretty big haystack..."

"So you still insist that the police investigation was insufficient?"

Prosecutor Gavin shook his head.

"The police aren't so incompetent to overlook a bloodstained weapon covered in poison. If such an item were on either the deck or tarmac, it would've been found."

"But—"



Mr. Secker smoothly interjected.

"If such a weapon did actually exist, then what of the ice pick in the defendant's hands? A bloodstained ice pick dipped in poison. I suppose according to your argument it was some kind of 'dummy' prepared by the true culprit..."

Mr. Secker gave a bitter laugh as he shrugged.

"Are you saying that the true culprit deliberately prepared an ice pick covered in blood and poison and dropped it by the defendant's feet? By the way, Dr. Mendel and myself were both in the departure lobby at the time watching TV with the other passengers. Do you think that from all the way over there we could somehow drop an ice pick next to the defendant in the hand luggage examination area and not be noticed?"

I had no counterargument. His assertion... was airtight.

Mr. Secker continued pressing for answers.

"Rather than making these bold leaps of logic, why don't we consider this rationally? Neither this true culprit or true non-metallic weapon exist. The defendant stabbed and killed my boss with the poisoned ice pick... That's all there is to it."

Ugh... At this rate we don't even need a prosecutor here.

This man is liable to end the trial all on his own.

The judge spoke.

"I see, we've all been lead into quite the labyrinth. Sometimes the simplest explanation is the true one. Any objections from the defence?"

Of course. If I don't object now, we'll be hit with a guilty verdict.

"Mr. Wright..."

Athena gave me a forlorn look.

Think. There has to be a contradiction somewhere. Apollo isn't a killer... Which leads me to ask... who killed Mr. Goodwin... and how?

It's hopeless. I can't think of anything. The timing with which Mr. Goodwin fell, the ice pick, everything points to Apollo as the killer.

But I can't stay silent. I need to prevent a guilty verdict.

"... There's something important which still hasn't been made clear."

I desperately ran my mouth.

"Something important? Like what?"

"The motive, of course!"

I raised my voice as if my life depended on it.

"There was no connection between the victim and the defendant. There was no reason to kill him. Until a motive is made clear, it's too soon to hand down a verdict!"



“A motive? I could think of a few.”

Mr. Secker said irritated.

“There's people out there who resort to violence simply due to an uncontrollable rage at the world. It's clear the defendant is simply one of those types.”

“Apollo isn't like that!”

Athena snapped, unable to contain herself.

The judge banged his gavel as a warning.

“We are in court. Please keep your personal opinions in check. It is true that there is no established motive, but all other points have been made clear. I see no reason to hold back from declaring my verdict.”

“You can't...!”

“If there are no further objections, I will hand down my verdict.”

The judge cleared his throat and looked around the courtroom.

**“Hold it!”**

An unexpected person raised their voice.

It was none other than – Prosecutor Gavin.

Mr. Secker raised an eyebrow in suspicion. The judge shook his head.

“What's this? An objection from the prosecution? What is the meaning of this, Prosecutor Gavin?”

Prosecutor Gavin responded calmly.

“The matter of motive is bothering me as well. I can't think of any reason that Herr Forehead would kill anyone.”

“Eh... Eeeh? But, you're the one pressing the charge of murder against the defendant...?”

“Of course, I haven't changed my position on that. But I won't be satisfied unless the full truth can be brought to light. Simply exposing the culprit and their method isn't enough. It's only when the motive is



made clear that the pieces come together.”

“Th... That's, well... I suppose... that's true...?”

The judge wasn't sure how to respond. It's only natural though. After all the one stepping in the way of his guilty verdict was the prosecution.

“One more day. One more day to uncover his motive.”

Prosecutor Gavin spoke smoothly as he played his air guitar.

Athena had her hands clasped together as she jumped for joy.

“Amazing! I can hear Prosecutor Gavin's rocking guitar!”

... I don't hear a thing.

But we're safe for now. It's an odd feeling for your opponent to pull you out of the fire at the eleventh hour, but that's just the kind of guy Prosecutor Gavin is.

The judge nodded, also overwhelmed by the air guitar.

“If that's what the prosecution wants, then I'll agree to it. I'll postpone my verdict until tomorrow. I would like both the defence and prosecution to try and determine the motive for this crime.”

I nodded. We're still at an incredible disadvantage, but we've been given another day of reprieve. I'll track down the true culprit if it's the last thing I do...!

# Chapter 6. No Matter How Bad it Gets...

[Same Day, 1:13 PM: Outside the District Courthouse]

With the first day of the trial over, Athena, Trucy and I left the courthouse.

Perhaps we should head back to Seafield city for info. I mean, what else can we do? We should use what time we have available wisely...

As I walked pondering these things, he appeared once again.

“That was a close call, Wright.”

“... Edgeworth...”

I was aghast. I'd ended today's trial at an incredible disadvantage, only to run into the person I least wanted to see...

“Were you watching the trial? The chief prosecutor has a lot more free time than I'd expect.”

Edgeworth ignored my flippancy as he responded.

“Don't think the prosecution's request for an extension was for your benefit. We simply pride ourselves on having definitive evidence for our guilty verdicts.”

“... I never considered it a favour.”

“Everything will be made clear in tomorrow's trial. The defendant will be proven guilty without a shadow of a doubt.”

“I'll prove his innocence without a shadow of a doubt.”

A slight smile appeared at the corner of Edgeworth's mouth as he spoke.

“I'll be appearing in court tomorrow.”

“... Eh!?”

Athena, Trucy and I all raised our voices at once.

Trucy spoke, still taken aback.

“You'll be handling the case, Mr. Edgeworth? What about Prosecutor Gavin?”

“I never said that. Gavin will still be prosecuting. I'm appearing as a witness.”

The three of us raised our voices again.

“As a witness? You of all people? What will you be testifying about...?”

“You think I'd tell you? Regardless, my perfect testimony will obtain our guilty verdict. Prepare yourselves.”

Edgeworth turned his back and walked away.

“A witness...? Mr. Edgeworth wasn't at the scene of the crime, was he?”

Trucy tilted her head. Athena spoke up.

“Come to think of it, we saw Prosecutor Edgeworth at Seafield airport. And he really seems to hate the victim, Mr. Goodwin.”

I wonder what the connection between him and Mr. Goodwin is.

A popular politician and the chief prosecutor... There's something fishy about this.

[Same Day, 1:52 PM: Wright Anything Agency]

We returned to the office to figure out our game plan.

“Let's go over the series of events again.”

A large sheet of paper was laid out on my desk. Trucy had laid out some small figures that had come as a bonus with some candy on the paper.

“This is the hand luggage examination area. Here's the counter with Mr. Sacco behind it. The only ones lined up are Mr. Goodwin and Apollo. Past the examination area is the departure lobby, which you can't enter unless you pass through a metal detector.”

I arranged the figures as I spoke.

“The passengers who had completed their inspection were in the departure lobby. All of them had cleared the metal detector, meaning none of them possessed metallic weapons on their person. Suddenly an ice pick fell by Apollo's feet. As soon as Apollo picked it up, Mr. Goodwin let out a scream and collapsed...”

“If that wasn't the moment he was stabbed, then why did he collapse?”

Athena was lost in thought.

“The theory that it was a shock reaction to the soccer match... isn't very likely.”

Trucy offered a harsh opinion. Ugh... Even I think it's unlikely... But I didn't really have many cards to play at the time.

“Anyway, Apollo isn't a killer, which means that Mr. Goodwin couldn't have been stabbed at that time. Let's assume it was a sudden case of anemia.”

I moved the figures located in the departure lobby.

“All the people who noticed the commotion came running over. They all passed through the metal detector on the way back. Which means none of them were carrying anything metallic at the time.”

“And Mr. Secker was the first one to reach Mr. Goodwin.”

That point was made clear by Ms. Temple's testimony.

“That's right. Then Ms. Temple was the next one to try and help Mr. Goodwin. She realised that Mr. Goodwin's shirt was bloody and screamed. That's when Dr. Mendel attempted to treat him, but it was already too late. They were the only three to have touched Mr. Goodwin.”

“Polly was detained and the police were contacted. Everyone involved gathered in the waiting room, but Mr. Secker went to the observation deck, followed shortly after by Dr. Mendel...”

The waiting room is close to the hand luggage examination area. And the observation deck is just past there.

“The police arrived and did body checks per Mr. Secker's proposal, but they found nothing suspicious... Hmm. As the only ones who didn't come to the waiting room, Mr. Secker and Dr. Mendel are definitely the most suspicious.”

“I agree. But we can't make a case against them without decisive evidence.”

“Decisive evidence... huh?”

Yeah. It'd be great if we could find the weapon with blood and poison on it... But Prosecutor Gavin had told that the deck and tarmac had been thoroughly investigated. There were no signs of any weapon.

“I got it!”

Trucy shouted.

“The weapon was a needle made of ice! Mr. Secker threw it away on the deck and it melted.”

“The ice would vanish, but the blood and poison would remain. It'd raise suspicion if those traces were found on the deck.”

“I know what happened!”

Athena raised her hand with a shout.

“The weapon was a biscuit! The culprit stabbed Mr. Goodwin to death with a sharp biscuit, then ate the weapon!”

“It was covered in deadly poison. You'd die if you ate it.”

“... Oh, good point.”

“Hmmm...” We all looked at each other as we thought.

Then beep boop beep... an electronic sound rang out. It was my ringtone.

“Hello...?”

I put my phone to my ear and a lively voice leapt from the other end.

“Ah, Nick! How ya doing!?”

“Eh...”

I was lost for words. I hadn't heard that voice in a while.

“Maya!? Is that you, Maya?”

“That's right. It's been a while, Nick. You sound like you're doing just fine!”

Her voice is so laid back. Hearing her at such a tense moment helped put my nerves at ease.

Maya – Maya Fey, was once my assistant. Or rather, her official job title was ‘assistant’, but she was so much more than that. When I was still just a novice attorney burning with the passion of

youth, Maya was always there to support me. Or rather she dragged me around with ridiculous energy and pushed me from behind when I needed it.

Maya and I resolved a lot of cases together. It's thanks to Maya that I've made it to where I am today as a lawyer. More so than an assistant, I'd rather consider her the ultimate 'partner'.

At the moment, Maya has left America to train in a country called the Kingdom of Khura'in. You would never guess from her laid back attitude, but Maya is a spirit medium with incredible power. In order to further improve her spiritual power, she has to train in the Kingdom of Khura'in.

"You seem to be doing well, Maya."

"Yep, yep! The training is tough, but everyone is so kind and I'm enjoying myself. The only problem is that there's nowhere to get my burger fix."

Trucy whispered "We're heading out for a bit." and dragged Athena off by the arm. Athena nodded and said "See ya later." as she left the room. It seems they wanted to leave me to take my phone call in private.

"What have you been up to lately, Nick? In trouble as usual?"

"It's not like I'm always in trouble... Although I'll admit this current trial is a tough nut to crack."

"All your trials are like that though. Struggling your way through?"

"Yeah... More or less."

I gave her an outline of the case. That the defendant was one of my employees and we'd reached the end of the first day up against ridiculous odds.

"Honestly, I'm stumped. In any other position I'd say that Apollo was obviously the killer. I believe in him of course... but I have no clue how to prove his innocence..."

My tone became darker as I spoke. I was aware of it, but I couldn't muster the energy to avoid it.

"—Wright."

Maya's tone suddenly changed. I gripped my cell phone tightly.

*"Have you forgotten? A lawyer is someone who smiles no matter how bad it gets."*

I was lost for words, I could simply just press the phone against my ear.

That voice... it couldn't be... Mia...?

Maya had an older sister. A lawyer named Mia Fey. Mia was my mentor back when I had just become a lawyer.

But Mia lost her life in a certain incident. Losing my mentor like that was a huge shock...

For many generations, the Fey family have been a clan of powerful spirit mediums. Which means that Maya must have called her sister's spirit to tell me that.

The summoned spirit of Mia has given me all kinds of useful advice in the past. Her words have always supported me when I hit rock bottom.

The voice on the other end of the line must be—



My phone is a pretty old model, so the sound isn't the clearest. But this voice is—

“... Just kidding!”

The voice on the other end of the line suddenly changed. The laughter was clearly Maya, not Mia.

“I sounded just like my sister for a moment there. Did I surprise you?”

“... Ah... Yeah. A little.”

Surprised doesn't cover it. The shock had hit me like a punch.

The worst of times are when a lawyer has to force their biggest smiles.

That is the single greatest piece of wisdom Mia imparted to me.

It's helped me out whenever my heart stops or I'm frustrated with no clear path ahead, yet it had slipped my mind. Today in court, I'd been furrowing my brow during the rough times when I should have been smiling.

“My sister isn't going to come out over a minor problem like this. You've gotta handle this yourself, Nick.”

“... Yeah.”

“You'll be fine, it'll work out! Just do your best!”

It's odd, but hearing Maya's carefree tone made me feel like things really would work out fine.

“Thanks. Hang in there with your training, Maya.”

“I will! Catch you later, Nick.”

The call ended. I raised my head, the clouds in my heart have cleared.

I'll be fine. No matter how bad it gets, I'll keep on smiling.

I'll keep the attorney's spirit I inherited from Mia Fey alive.

# Chapter 7. The Victim's True Colors

[March 15, 10:00 AM: District Court – Courtroom No. 3]

The second day of the trial has begun.

“The defence is ready, your honor.”

“The prosecution is okay.”

The judge nodded and opened his mouth.

“In yesterday's trial, we held off on delivering a verdict due to a lack of motive for the defendant.

The prosecution has told us that they would have an established motive today, but have you anything to show for it?”

Prosecutor Gavin had a confident expression as he snapped his fingers.

“Of course. I've got the perfect witness lined up too.”

“In that case, I suggest we hear their testimony immediately.”

The courtroom doors opened and the witness entered.

The judge took one look at the witness and blinked in surprise.

“Ch-Chief Prosecutor Edgeworth? What are you doing here? Are we switching to another prosecutor today?”

“Nothing of the sort. I'm here as a witness.”

“You're... a witness!?”

“Indeed.”

The judge was momentarily dumbfounded, but quickly regained his composure as he continued.

“Well in that case... Let's move on with your testimony. Ah, but first your name and occupation.

Though it's hardly necessary, we should proceed for formality's sake.”

“Miles Edgeworth. I'm the Chief Prosecutor.”

Edgeworth carried an air of authority greater than the judge as he introduced himself, leading into his testimony.

“My testimony does not relate directly to the incident. I will instead be discussing certain hidden details regarding the victim.”

“The victim... Mr. Goodwin?”

“That's right. Truman Goodwin was first elected at the age of 30, and in the 30 years since he's continued acting as a local politician in his hometown. While other members of parliament have been involved in various scandals over the years, he has always maintained a clean image. However

—”

Edgeworth's expression was even harsher than usual.

“But this clean image was merely a facade, he was a man who performed various dastardly acts for his own benefit.”

“... Eh? Then that means...”

“It's a long list. Accepting both personal and professional bribes, tax evasion, rigged elections... He was anything but clean.”

“Oh... Oh my...! Is this true?”

The judge's face was red with rage. He may be a fairly easy going judge, but it seems he has a deep hatred of corruption.

Edgeworth nodded before continuing.



“Most notably were the deals involved in the construction of Seafield Airport. To begin with, the city is windy all year round, making it an unsuitable location to build an airport. However, he has spent decades laying the groundwork for its development. He has received large amounts of money from construction and aviation companies. Though his public position was that it was 'for the city's development'...”

Edgeworth slammed the witness stand. He had the expression of a prosecutor, not a witness...

“The only benefits were the ones made to Mr. Goodwin's bank account. The prosecutor's office has been secretly investigating for evidence of fraud. Mr. Goodwin noticed our investigation closing in on him and became desperate to dispose of all the evidence, however traces still remained. We were only a step away from exposing him... When Mr. Goodwin was suddenly murdered.”

I was stunned.

There's should be no real connection between Mr. Goodwin's fraud and his murder. Yet Edgeworth was still called as a 'witness' for the murder case.

Edgeworth spoke.

“I think it's possible that the motive behind this murder may be related to Mr. Goodwin's fraud. I've heard that our defendant has an incredibly strong sense of justice. It's possible that he may have learned of Mr. Goodwin's fraud and found his actions so deplorable that he deemed it necessary to judge him by his own hand!”

The gallery went into an uproar. Newspaper reporters left the courtroom to pass on this latest information.

The judge slammed his gavel.

“Order, order! This is a truly shocking revelation. Does the defence have any objections?”

“—Of course I do.”

I nodded. It may be that Mr. Goodwin was in actuality a horrible person, but I wasn't willing to accept it as a motive.

“The defendant has no relation to Mr. Goodwin. There's no way he could have known about the fraud. It doesn't hold up as a motive!”

“Is that so?”

Prosecutor Gavin opened his mouth.

Having fulfilled his role, Edgeworth turned on his heel and left the witness stand. Prosecutor Gavin gave him a light bow before he continued.

“Herr Goodwin had strong support from the people of Seafield city. Among them are people aware of his fraud, yet who still support him. The reason for this is because they're in his debt.”

“Debt...?”

“Just little things. Using his connections to make sure their son gets into college. Keeping their

businesses from going under. Sweeping away minor charges like speeding tickets.”

A number of people could be heard gulping nervously in the gallery. It seems a few of those people are in the audience today...

“But there were a few people who refused to give in to Herr Goodwin. And Herr Alden Berger was their leader.”

... It seems Prosecutor Gavin has done his homework on Alden too...

The judge enquired.

“Alden Berger? What kind of man is he?”

“He owns a ramen shop in Seafield city. He's currently retired, having passed the shop on to his grandson. He's a straightforward man who directly butted heads with Herr Goodwin. As a result, they've been subject to harassment to drive the shop out of business. And it's worth noting that Alden's grandson, Ramon Berger, the current proprietor of the store — is a close friend of the defendant.”

Prosecutor Gavin had a triumphant smile.

“I'd like to summon our second witness, Herr Ramon Berger. His testimony will make the defendant's motive abundantly clear!”

Ramon took the witness stand with a disgruntled expression.

“Ramon Berger. I run the ramen shop 'The Flying Spaghetti Master'.”

Quickly introducing himself, Ramon forcefully began his testimony.

“I've only one thing to say here today. Apollo isn't a killer! He's the straightest arrow I've ever known. He'd never kill a man!”

“Come now, Herr Berger.”

Prosecutor Gavin cut in.

“We want a straight testimony from you. I never asked for an assessment of Herr Forehead's character, both you and I know him well enough.”

“Then it should be obvious! Charging Apollo with murder is total bullsh...”

“You held a grudge against Herr Goodwin. A grudge you discussed with the defendant. Isn't that right?”

Ramon's manner suddenly changed.

His brashness faded away as he became timid...

“A grudge...? What for? Mr. Goodwin was a great politician. I respected him...”

“Tell us the truth. As your grandfather opposed Herr Goodwin, 'The Flying Spaghetti Master' began receiving harassment to drive customers away. It's only natural for you to resent Herr Goodwin.”

“Th-that's not true! Mr. Goodwin was a great politician!”

Ramon shook his head fiercely.

Mr. Goodwin was dead and gone, his fraudulent activities uncovered, yet his influence on the people of Seafield city wouldn't fade that easily.

Ramon seemed to fear something.

It was at this point that Athena, who had been standing silently next to me until now, whispered to me.

“Mr. Wright. Ramon's emotions are disturbed.”

“... Eh?”

“There's a lot of noise. If you point it out, he may open his heart a little.”

—That's right.

Athena's hearing really is impressive.

When there's a contradiction between someone's words and their feelings, she hears distorted 'noise' in their voice. Nothing gets past her hearing.

“But Ramon seems to be hiding his true feelings to cover for Apollo. If he reveals how he really feels, it could put Apollo at a disadvantage.”

Athena's expression clouded.

Indeed. The prosecution's goal is clear.

Ramon and Apollo are close. If Ramon's grudge against Mr. Goodwin became clear, it would be disadvantageous to Apollo. But even so, we can't avert our eyes from the truth. Only when the whole truth has been revealed can the right verdict be delivered. The verdict that Apollo is not guilty.

Holding on to this belief, I nodded to Athena.

Prosecutor Gavin continued his questioning.

“It's no use denying it. It's quite clear that Alden hates Herr Goodwin.”

“N-not really. Grandpa doesn't hate Mr. Goodwin, they're childhood friends, so...”

“We have several accounts. There's a good number of people who have heard Alden badmouthing Herr Goodwin.”

Unable to hide it any longer, Ramon hung his head.

“... Yeah. It's true. Grandpa is so stubborn. He kept badmouthing Mr. Goodwin in public. As a result... all our customers have been driven away...”

So many of Seafield city's residents owed Mr. Goodwin their gratitude. It's only natural they'd turn against those who opposed him. I'm not sure I can even imagine the harassment levelled at 'The Flying Spaghetti Master'.

“It seems your grandfather has caused you some trouble.”

“Totally! Every time he trash talks Mr. Goodwin, I'm always telling him. Mr. Goodwin is a great politician... geez! But grandpa never listens. I swear, he's such a handful...”

“Hold it!”

Athena raised her voice.

It's Athena's time to shine. I kept quiet and let her do the talking.

“Ramon, your statement just now strikes me as odd.”

“... How so?”

“Ah, it isn't about what you said... But the contradiction in your feelings.”

“... Contradiction?”

“When you described your grandfather as 'such a handful', you felt happy. I'm guessing in actuality you're proud of how your grandfather won't back down against Mr. Goodwin?”

Ramon's expression was as if he had been slapped. His clenched fists trembled. Athena looked Ramon directly in the eye.

Nobody can hide their true feelings from Athena.

Ramon averted his eyes for a moment, before lifting his head and speaking in a weak voice.

“... You're right. I was proud. Happy even... No matter the consequences, grandpa wouldn't back down from that bastard Goodwin...”

Tears streamed down Ramon's face.

“Even though we lost our customers and we barely made a living... I was still happy. I'd constantly complain about him, but I truly respect my grandfather...”

... Hm? Hold it. Something doesn't add up here.

I quickly identified what struck me as off and enquired about it.

“You barely made a living... Is that true?”

Ramon glared at me.

“We had no customers. Of course we weren't making any money!”

“But that doesn't add up. If you were really so hard up for cash, why didn't Alden give up his hobby?”

“Huh? What hobby?”

“His private aircraft. Even the smallest aircraft has significant maintenance costs. How did he cover the costs?”

“What are you talking about?”

Ramon tilted his head as he looked at me.

He didn't seem to be playing dumb. He seriously had no idea what I was talking about.

“Your grandfather has his own private aircraft, doesn't he?”

“Eh!? Private aircraft!? My grandpa!? You're kidding. The only vehicles we have are my old

pickup truck and Armen's worn out bike."

Ramon stared blankly. Prosecutor Gavin spoke with an exasperated shrug.

"I hate to say it, but the Flying Spaghetti Master's financial struggles are just as stated. Do you really think that they could afford something as extravagant as a private aircraft?"

No, but... Both Athena and I heard about it.

Ramon doesn't seem to be lying... what's going on with this contradiction?

"We heard Ramon's younger brother Armen talking about it. Grandpa's plane is the coolest... or something along those lines."

Ramon stared blankly for a moment, before bursting out in laughter, slamming the witness stand.

"Ah, I see. So that's it! That's a total misunderstanding."

"A misunderstanding?"

"Grandpa's plane is a paper plane."

... Eh. A paper plane...?

"Grandpa is an aviation maniac, but he also loves paper planes. He came up with his own original way of folding them and taught all the kids in the neighbourhood, he's totally into it."

"Paper... planes...!? Armen was talking about paper planes, not a private aircraft!?"

"Of course. It should've been obvious!"

The gallery tried to stifle their laughter. I never suspected that 'grandpa's plane' was a paper plane... I'd jumped to the wrong conclusion and embarrassed myself.

Prosecutor Gavin gave a sarcastic laugh as he returned to the previous topic.

"Anyway, the witness hated Herr Goodwin. I'm sure you'll acknowledge that?"

Ramon nodded in resignation.

"You've seen right through me. I'll admit it. I hated Goodwin."

"And you told the defendant about this grudge?"

"... Yeah. Apollo was willing to hear out my problems, so... I told him all my complaints. How it was Goodwin's fault everything in town was screwed up... That we'd all be better off if he was dead..."

"And what did the defendant say?"

"He told me not to do anything stupid... Calmed me down."

"Thank you. This has been an enlightening testimony."

Prosecutor Gavin turned back to the judge.

"We've established a motive. The defendant felt the pain of his friend Ramon—"

And in a finishing gesture, Prosecutor Gavin pointed directly at the defendant's chair.

"And thus, killed Herr Goodwin in his stead!"

"... I see."

The judge nodded. This is bad...

“The defendant has a strong sense of justice and cares for his friends. He kept his friend from going too far and... this is the result.”

“Objection!”

I shouted immediately.

“That's no reason for the defendant to resort to murder! He'd sooner expose Mr. Goodwin's fraud fairly to save his friend!”

“I'm afraid your objection is overruled.”

The judge shook his head.

“To raise an objection, you need either a logical contradiction or physical evidence. Does the defence possess any evidence?”

I had no comeback. ... The judge was right. Evidence is everything in court. I can't use Apollo's temperament as an argument.

But I can't back down.

“We heard testimony from Mr. Secker yesterday, however there's another person we haven't heard from — Dr. Mendel. Mr. Secker's testimony alone isn't enough!”

Prosecutor Gavin gave a friendly smile.

“I figured as much, so I had him summoned to court today. It's about time we bring him out.”

... Ugh. Outmanoeuvred again. With a prosecutor this prepared, I doubt there'll be many holes in Dr. Mendel's testimony...

No, if there's no existing holes, then I'll just have to poke some myself, that's my role as an attorney. I'll drag some useful testimony out of him one way or another.

“Sergio Mendel. I'm a doctor.”

Standing at the witness stand, Dr. Mendel looked like an older gentleman with streaks of grey hair. He was plump and had a moustache below his nose.

Prosecutor Gavin spoke.

“On the day of the incident, you didn't go to the waiting room with everyone else and instead were with Herr Secker, some may find that suspicious. What do you have to say?”

“There's nothing to be suspicious about.”

Dr. Mendel answered.

“The reason I didn't go to the waiting room was because I was still shaken after such an unbelievable incident. I was in no state to be shut in a small room with a lot of other people. I noticed that Mr. Secker had wandered off without entering the room, so I followed him.”

“Are you and Herr Secker close?”

"I wouldn't consider us close, but we are acquainted. I'm Mr. Goodwin's doctor after all. I thought I'd be more comfortable with Mr. Secker than a room filled with strangers."

"And what did you do after that?"

"We went to the observation deck. It's calming to be able to get some fresh air."

"The two of you were together there until the police arrived?"

"Technically, we headed back to the waiting room shortly before the police arrived. After that, everyone underwent a body search at Mr. Secker's suggestion."

"Just to cover our bases, did Herr Secker do anything suspicious on the observation deck? For example, disposing of or hiding anything."

"Nothing of the sort."

"I see, thank you. We have a clear picture of the situation."

Prosecutor Gavin turned back to me.

"As you heard, there was nothing out of the ordinary."

"—I'm not so sure."

I shook my head. The two of them are acquaintances. They could've spoken to get their story straight.

Anyway, time for my cross examination.

"You had no idea that Mr. Secker and Mr. Goodwin were catching the same flight that day?"

"That's right. I had no clue until I saw Mr. Secker in the departure lobby."

"Did you speak with Mr. Secker after you saw him?"

"No. I just waved to acknowledge him. I was paying attention to the soccer game on TV."

"Then please tell us about when you heard Mr.



Goodwin's scream and ran over."

"I suddenly heard a scream and ran over without thinking. Mr. Secker was cradling Mr. Goodwin in his arms. I said 'Don't shake him' and warned people not to touch the ice pick used as the weapon."

"That's quite clear judgement."

"It's part of the job. If I went into a panic any time someone collapsed, I wouldn't be much of a doctor. After all, I..."

Dr. Mendel's expression warped.

"I was worried about Mr. Goodwin's condition. His eyes were rolled back and he was convulsing. I realised that this was no ordinary stabbing, I wanted to administer first aid immediately... But it was already too late."

Dr. Mendel hung his head.

"And after that, you stayed out of the waiting room and went to the observation deck with Mr. Secker?"

"That's right."

"And what did you discuss?"

"Eh? Oh, nothing... Nothing important at least."

Dr. Mendel's gaze was briefly uneasy.

... Huh? I wonder what that was. It was a question I'd asked with little thought, but something about it had shaken Dr. Mendel. Is there some kind of contradiction hidden here?

"I don't care if it was unimportant. I want you to tell me what you discussed."

Dr. Mendel lost his cool and began looking around nervously.

"I don't know...? It was just small talk... I don't recall the details."

"Having regular small talk right after Mr. Goodwin had died? Isn't that a bit too laid back?"

"No... I mean..."

Sweat poured down Dr. Mendel's brow.

—I've got it. Dr. Mendel can't testify on this point. The reason being—

"You can't remember a single thing you discussed? Were you really together with Mr. Secker? You were really acting separately, weren't you?"

"Y-You're wrong! I really was on the deck with Mr. Secker. Oh yes, I just remembered. I had a phone call."

"A... phone call?"

"That's right. After the incident happened, I had to cancel my travel plans, so I called to tell my family. So I didn't really speak to Mr. Secker."

"You made a call from the observation deck? Did you use your cell phone?"

“... Oh... Uh... Yes, I did.”

**“Objection!”**

I shouted at the top of my voice. I felt like a weight had come off my shoulders.

“There's no phone reception on the observation deck. Mr. Secker's testimony attested to that yesterday.”

“... Howah!? Ah... I remember now!”

Dr. Mendel leapt up flailing his arms about, before returning to his former calm gentlemanly demeanour.

“Th-that's right, I didn't recall correctly. I didn't take the call on the observation deck. It was after I'd returned to the building and things slowed down after the police search...”

“Dr. Mendel. It's obvious that's a half baked lie. We can easily determine what time you made a phone call by checking your phone records.”

“Howah!?”

Dr. Mendel leapt up flailing his arms about again... He's so transparent.

With all eyes on him, Dr. Mendel confessed with embarrassment.

“Sorry... The truth is I never went to the observation deck. Well... I was planning to accompany Mr. Secker, but he wanted to be alone... So we parted ways and I made my call in the hallway...”

“Mr. Secker requested some time alone?”

“Y-yes...”

“Why did you lie about accompanying him to the observation deck?”

“That's... Well...”

Having become a shadow of his former self, Dr. Mendel twiddled his fingers timidly.

“Because that's what Mr. Secker told me I should say.”

“Telling lies in court is a serious crime. Were you aware of that?”

“I... knew that, but... sorry. Just... if it was known I'd been wandering on my own outside the waiting room... I was afraid of becoming a suspect...”

Seems I've got all I need from him now. I turned to the prosecution. Prosecutor Gavin was tuning his air guitar with a calm expression...

“Both Mr. Secker and Dr. Mendel were on their own. Either one of them had opportunity to dispose of weapon. The airport should be searched again!”

“Objection. I oversaw the investigation. It was very thorough, nothing was overlooked.”

“But...!”

“I told you yesterday. There was nothing found on the observation deck, the tarmac or the hallways. There's no way a weapon was disposed of.”

“Objection! Now that their lies have been exposed, we have to ascertain the objective behind

their cover up!"

"Alright. Let's hear from Herr Secker again then."

Prosecutor Gavin looked at the gallery. His fangirls in the audience squeed. Some of them even waved hand fans about. This isn't a concert hall.

"Herr Secker, you're in the crowd today as well, right? How about you come on down to the stage?"

Prosecutor Gavin gave a flashy signal to the bleachers... I mean, gallery.

And in response, none other than Mr. Secker stood up.

He silently came down to the stage... I mean, witness stand. His expression was a little stiff, yet calm. When he reached the witness stand, Mr. Secker gave a deep bow.

"I'd like to start with an apology. I'm sorry for lying about being with Dr. Mendel yesterday."

"Lying on the stand is a serious offence."

The judge scolded him sternly. Mr. Secker lowered his head again.

"I deeply regret my actions. I was embarrassed to admit the truth, so I requested for Dr. Mendel to also lie to you... I can see I've inconvenienced you."

"What is there to be embarrassed about?"

"I'm embarrassed about the reason I requested my time alone."

Mr. Secker pushed his glasses up with his finger.

"I needed somewhere to cry."

"What?"

"The boss I'd served for so long had been murdered in cold blood. I couldn't help but cry."



"... I see, so that's how it is. A perfectly understandable reaction..."

The judge was quickly swayed by this story.

I won't be swayed so easily though. I spoke harshly as I glared at him.

"You stayed out of the waiting room and chased off Dr. Mendel so you could cry alone on the observation deck?"

"Indeed. I like that observation deck. It's calming to watch the planes as they take off. I've often gone there to stare at the skies."

"I see, so you're intimately familiar with the observation deck's layout."

I nodded as I pressed for more answers.

"For example, you may know about little gaps, places you

might hide things without being found?"

"—What might you be suggesting?"

Mr. Secker scoffed. Prosecutor Gavin spoke again.

"There's no 'secret hiding spots' on that observation deck. I swear upon my guitar."

... I'm not sure how much weight there is to swearing on a guitar.

I looked to the judge.

"Mr. Secker's lies have been to construct an alibi. First he put a gag order on Ms. Temple, now he's persuaded Dr. Mendel to lie to us. His bad intentions should be clear!"

"You think so?"

The judge shook his head.

"Not wanting to cry in front of others... I know that feeling well. Perjury may be a crime, but I see no ill will in his actions."

Eh... Eeeeeeh... The judge is way too easily swayed.

Prosecutor Gavin spoke up.

"Yesterday's trial established that only the defendant had an opportunity to commit the crime. The only thing uncovered was his motive, which we've already cleared up today. Herr Secker has given a clear explanation for his lies. Is there any reason not to hand down a verdict immediately?"

"I agree."

Mr. Secker nodded.

"I've nothing else to hide. I intend to fully disclose all the details about the boss's fraudulent activities once this is over as well."

The judge responded with a question.

"Oho? So you acknowledge that Mr. Goodwin was involved in fraud?"

"—Yes. My boss was a fine politician, but he was blinded by greed and went off the straight and narrow. I told him countless times that he should cease his behaviour, but he refused to listen. Ultimately... I will accept the blame for this breach of the public's trust. Finally letting the truth out is an incredible weight off my shoulders."

Mr. Secker's voice trembled as he spoke.

The gallery once again became unsettled. People were whispering to each other.

(Mr. Secker has done nothing wrong. Goodwin is the one at fault!)

(It must have been tough as his secretary. I feel sorry for him.)

Crap. The atmosphere in the courtroom seems to be heading for a swift verdict. At this rate a guilty verdict will be handed down.

Mr. Secker lifted his head and spoke clearly.

"I would like to atone for my inability to prevent my boss's actions. And intend to do my best for

the public in the future.”

He's speaking as if the trial is already over and he's planning his next step.

I won't let it end like this though.

Somewhere... There has to be a contradiction somewhere.

“I admire your resolve.”

The judge nodded.

“I would like to save your testimony on Mr. Goodwin's fraud for another trial though.”

“Of course, I wholeheartedly agree. Which is why I feel we shouldn't waste any further time and bring this trial to a swift conclusion. After all, I've still got mountains of paperwork left behind by the boss to take care of.”

“Understood. In that case...”

The judge picked up his gavel.

The scene of the courtroom fell silent. The judge was about to hand down his verdict.

I took a moment to think during the silence. ... What was it? Something Mr. Secker just said didn't seem right. Was there a contradiction there? He said he was busy... Because Mr. Goodwin left behind a mountain of paperwork. Well, of course a politician would be busy. I'm not sure what the contradiction...

It hit me. I finally realised. The unnatural element.

As the judge began bringing down his gavel, I shouted at full force.

**“Objection—!”**

# Chapter 8. To the Core of the Incident

I shouted loud enough to rival even Apollo.

The judge almost dropped his gavel.

“W-what does the defence have to say? You still have objections at this point?”

“Of course I do.”

I puffed out my chest as I looked at Mr. Secker. Mr. Secker gave me a look that said I was fighting a losing battle.

“According to Mr. Secker, Mr. Goodwin had a heavy workload.”

“Of course he did. When you're as important politician as the boss, you've got inspections and meetings planned constantly. He's also invited to parties, not to mention the daily dinners and assemblies...”

“But that's odd. The schedule I saw in his office was blank.”

Mr. Secker had a dubious expression for a moment before his face twitched. He'd realised what I was getting at.

“That's... sometimes those plans are... well...”

“Nope.”

I shook my head.

“There was something odd about that schedule. It was filled from the start of the month up until a certain day, after which it's blank.”

“...”

“From the 12th of March onwards, the day Mr. Goodwin was killed, the schedule is blank. That's clearly suspicious!”

Mr. Secker glared at me wordlessly. He still had his usual cool expression, but I could tell he was sweating underneath.

The judge asked a question.

“So... what is it that the defence is claiming?”

“Mr. Goodwin had no plans beyond March 12th. Almost as if he knew he would be stabbed that day.”

“What could that mean?”

“It's simple. Basically—”

Everything suddenly became clear, like wiping fogged up glass with a cloth.

“Mr. Goodwin stabbed himself!”

“Wh-what!?”



The judge had a confused expression. The gallery went into an uproar.

Right. I should have realised sooner.

Why that schedule was conspicuously blank. It was a huge hint hidden in plain sight.

The ice pick fell by Apollo's feet. Who had dropped it there? The person standing closest — in other words, Mr. Goodwin was the natural assumption.

Mr. Goodwin wasn't ill. Yet he had suddenly shouted and collapsed. Why?

Alden had described him as the "king of cheaters". The kind of guy who would fake illness to get out of a big cleaning day.

And so, we find Mr. Goodwin about to have his fraudulent activity revealed.

Faced with this truth, the answer was clear.

"Himself...!? I-is the defence asserting that Mr. Goodwin's death was a suicide!?"

"Not at all."

I shook my head and looked at Mr. Secker. Mr. Secker's face was pale. It won't take much more to break his cool mask.

"His plan was to go to the emergency room. To escape the investigation run by the prosecutor's office, he would get himself hospitalised. Typically, you'd just fake an illness, but he was known to be in good health. It was part of his appeal to the public. It'd be suspicious if he suddenly fell ill. So he came up with the idea of 'being assaulted by a ruffian'."

"Wh... whaaaaat...!?"

The judge's voice cracked.

"B-but, defence. The weapon was coated in deadly poison. There's hardly any point in being

hospitalised if you're dead!"

"Indeed. Mr. Goodwin obviously had no intention of using a poisoned weapon. He wound he gave himself a light scratch, nothing that could be life threatening. It would naturally be a bit painful, but nothing he couldn't handle. He hid his wound under his hand when he lined up at the hand luggage inspection area."

The inspection officer was absorbed in watching a soccer match. That's when Apollo lined up behind him. Seeing it as the ideal time, he dropped his hidden ice pick on the floor. And as Apollo picked it up, he shouted "What are you doing!?" and collapsed.

"The people who heard his scream would run over and he'd be transported to the hospital... that was how it was supposed to happen. But things didn't go as planned for Mr. Goodwin. He was instead killed by a deadly poison."

I can finally see the truth behind this incident.

Mr. Goodwin gave himself a light wound. Nothing that would really require being admitted to hospital.

So obviously, he had an accomplice. Someone who could provide a medical assessment and say "He needs a hospital and plenty of bed rest." — in other words, a doctor.

I slammed the desk in front of me and raised my voice.

"I request further testimony from Dr. Mendel!"

Upon his return to the witness stand, Dr. Mendel no longer looked like a dignified gentleman. He was already frazzled and waving his arms around.

Before he began testifying, I made sure to warn him.

"Dr. Mendel. Don't forget lying in court is a serious offence. Got it?"

"G... g... got it..."

"You told us a good number of lies earlier. If you tell any further lies..."

"I-I understand! I've got it! I'll tell the truth! **I did iiiit!**"

"..."

That was quick. That's the fastest witness breakdown I've ever seen.

"Please calm down, Dr. Mendel. So when you say 'I did it'..."

"It's true! It's the truth! I'm not lying!"

He cried and flailed about. He's a lot weaker than he looks.

"Calm down. What did you do? Did you kill Mr. Goodwin?"

"Eh! I-impossible! There's no waaaay!"

"Please tell us exactly what it was you did."

Dr. Mendel finally stopped flailing and spoke dejectedly.

“Sorry... It wasn't a coincidence that Mr. Goodwin and I were on the same flight... I lied. The truth is we arranged to have tickets for the same flight in advance.”

“This was planned by Mr. Goodwin?”

“That's right. Mr. Goodwin said he wanted to be admitted to hospital. He would pretend to be stabbed at the airport and wanted me to have him taken back to my hospital and be consigned to 'complete bed rest'.”

“That's some fairly shady activity, why didn't you decline his request?”

“I couldn't refuse. Not after everything he's done for me... he helped cover up a little malpractice incident... A-ah. Strike that from the record! Pretend you didn't hear that!”

... That's not the kind of thing we should overlook, but it's unrelated to the case at hand. I'm sure someone will take plenty of time looking into that later.

“What arrangements did you make in advance while planning the incident?”

“First, Mr. Goodwin would stab himself in his side. Only a light wound of course. After wiping his prints he'd hide the ice pick under his clothes. He'd apply pressure to the wound with his hand as he went to the hand luggage examination area and lined up. The examination officer there is always distracted thinking about soccer, so there was no need to worry about being noticed. As soon as someone lined up behind him he'd drop the ice pick. The moment the person behind him picked it up, he would scream and collapse. As soon as we heard that, Mr. Secker and I would run over and pick him up, before anyone else could raise any suspicion, we'd drive him to the hospital... that was the plan.”

“What if the person behind him didn't pick up the ice pick?”

“The plan wouldn't change. I'd have falsely claimed that I saw them drop it.”

The more I hear, the less I like about this plan.

“However, things didn't go according to plan at all, did they?”

“Indeed. I never expected this outcome.”

Dr. Mendel went pale as he began trembling.

“I didn't know what went wrong, I was bewildered. I wanted to speak with Mr. Secker about it, so I followed after him. But he said he wanted to be alone... so I gave up and wandered around the hallway.”

“Why have you remained silent until now?”

“I was an accomplice in his plan... But then it unexpectedly evolved into a murder incident... I was too scared to say anything... I'm sorry, I'm so sorry.”

I nodded.

Mr. Secker was standing to the side of the witness stand, giving Dr. Mendel a death glare.

“Mr. Secker. Do you acknowledge these claims?”

“Not at all. Total hogwash.”

Mr. Secker answered with a sigh.

“Stabbing yourself to be admitted to hospital? I've never heard such a ridiculous plan. And if the boss had come up with something like that, I'd have stopped him.”

“Wh... what was that!?”

Dr. Mendel held his head in his hands as he stared at Mr. Secker in disbelief.

“W-why you, that's a complete lie...! You, Mr. Goodwin and myself all met together to meticulously plan things out!”

“I recall nothing of the sort. Are you sure it wasn't a dream, Dr. Mendel?”

Mr. Secker laughed scornfully.

I'm sure there's no solid evidence of their conspiring left. So he figures he'll ride it out by feigning ignorance.

I glared at Mr. Secker.

“You're saying Mr. Goodwin didn't plan it all out himself? In that case, could you please explain why his schedule was clear after March 12th?”

“It's simple.”

Mr. Secker shrugged.

“The boss works very hard and was feeling somewhat fatigued. He wanted to take a short break from his job. Hence the blank schedule.”

“But that doesn't add up with what you said earlier. A politician of Mr. Goodwin's standing always has a packed schedule...”

“Hence why he was fatigued. It's only natural he'd want a vacation. Surely anyone would want a break after a period of continuous work?

“Hmm...”

The judge had an expression of agreement. Mr. Secker continued without delay.

“I'm sure the judge is tired. Wouldn't you like to bring this trial to an end and go home to play with your grandchildren?”

“... Ho!?”

Looks like he can play our judge like a fiddle.

Mr. Secker spoke in an even louder voice.

“These delusions and false accusations only serve to drag the length of this trial out and waste everybody's time. If we could bring a swift and just verdict...”

I was about to offer a counter argument.

But someone else spoke up first—

“It's not the witness' decision what constitutes a waste of time.”

It was Prosecutor Gavin.

Mr. Secker was about to offer an indignant reply, but Prosecutor Gavin kept speaking.

“Anyway, I say we listen to the defence's claim. The defence purports that Herr Goodwin stabbed himself, right?”

I gave a bewildered nod.

The prosecution wanting to hear the defence's theory? It's an odd situation.

Athena whispered to me happily.

“I bet Prosecutor Gavin doesn't want to see Apollo convicted either. That's why he wants to hear our theory. He's so nice!”

... No, I doubt that's the case.

Trials are always an all out battle. I've got a bad feeling about this.

But, hesitation won't get me anywhere.

It's time for the defence to make its appeal.

“Mr. Goodwin came up with the whole incident in order to be hospitalised. Meaning he planned it himself. He likely stabbed himself somewhere he couldn't be seen, like the VIP lounge. He then lined up at the examination area while hiding his wound, waiting for the right moment to drop the ice pick at the defendant's feet.”

“The investigation determined that the ice pick was covered in Herr Goodwin's blood and a deadly poison. So according to the defence's claim the poison was merely camouflage... is that right?”

“That's right. The true culprit was there when Mr. Goodwin stabbed himself. He then told Mr. Goodwin 'I'll wipe the prints for you', and secretly applied the poison while doing so. Unaware of this, Mr. Goodwin acted according to the plan. He pretended to be stabbed and collapsed as he waited for his secretary and doctor to carry him off. However, and I can't say whether he was aware at this point, the poison was soon circulating his body leaving him unable to speak. It was only a matter of seconds later that he was dead.”

“And what did the culprit do next?”

“He split away from everyone else and went off on his own... to dispose of the real weapon...”

My words were frail and fading. Prosecutor Gavin gave a satisfied laugh.

“So we're back to square one. How did the true culprit dispose of the weapon? And I won't accept any half baked explanations.. like a secret hiding spot on the observation deck. There was no sign of any weapons within the airport.”

Prosecutor Gavin thrust his finger at me.

“I'd like an answer. Where did this real weapon disappear? As long as you can't explain that, your theory has no legs. It's unproven!”

Mr. Secker's disgruntled expression changed back to one of triumph as he looked at Prosecutor Gavin.

Athena clenched her fists in frustration.

"Ngh...! So this was his plan. He's not a nice guy at all!"

... Well, duh.

Making his argument after hearing our assertion in detail makes it more convincing. Whispers rose in the gallery.

(I knew it, he's guilty.)

(The defence is only trying to buy time, just as Mr. Secker said.)

"Hmm... it seems we've reached a conclusion."

The judge spoke.

"As the prosecution claims, there was no way to dispose of a weapon, meaning that there is no one other than the defendant who could have committed this crime. Therefore..."

"There was a way."

I smiled.

It was a particularly bold smile.

The judge stopped the hand holding his gavel and looked at me.

"Oho? Did the defence just say something?"

"Of course there was a way. Only one way to have disposed of the weapon."

"Mr. Wright! I knew you'd find something!"

Athena gave light applause as she spoke.

I gave the biggest smile I could, just as my mentor Mia had taught me. In other words — it was the worst of times. Think. There must be a way. A way to dispose of a weapon.

"Please explain to the court. The one way the weapon could be disposed of?"

The weapon wasn't found anywhere on the observation deck or its surrounding. But the only time Mr. Secker could've disposed of a weapon was when he was on his own on the observation deck.

A way he could've destroyed the weapon in a few minutes... what could it be...

"The defence is bluffing. Another feeble attempt to buy time."

Mr. Secker said. The judge looked at me pensively.

I've hit a dead end. At a time like this—

Right. I need to turn my thinking around.

I'm not thinking of a way to easily dispose of a weapon. I'm thinking of a weapon that could easily be disposed of.

Why did Mr. Secker go to the observation deck? Because it was the only place he could dispose

of his weapon.

What's special about the observation deck? It's open air and faces out over the tarmac. The tarmac has various aircraft upon it, preparing for take off into the great blue sky—

The great blue sky...? Of course... The sky! That's why Mr. Secker went to the observation deck.

“... It seems he has nothing to say. Now, my verdict...”

**“Objection!”**

I raised my voice.

It may be a ridiculous idea. But nothing else could possibly fit. If the weapon was made of ice or a biscuit, it still would've taken a significant time to get rid of. There's only one weapon that could make good use of the observation deck.

“A paper plane.”

I lifted my head high.

The judge asked back, thinking he'd misheard something.

“Oh? What was that?”

“The weapon used by the killer was a paper plane!”

“A... paper plane?”

“The culprit killed Mr. Goodwin with a paper plane and threw the weapon from the observation deck!”

The judge stared at me blankly. The gallery went silent too.

Prosecutor Gavin was the one to break the silence.

“So you're finally all out of options and going for broke? No matter how bad things get, I'd like you to at least take this trial seriously.”

“I'm completely serious.”

I'm going for broke — I'll admit it. But I've got a good feeling about this.

When Armen mentioned 'grandpa's plane', he was talking about a paper plane. Which means it's natural to assume the 'awesome black plane' he saw was also a paper plane.

And this was that plane.

“The winds are strong around Seafield airport. If you threw a paper plane from there, it'd be gone within the blink of an eye.”

“You're seriously going with this?”

Prosecutor Gavin was exasperated... or perhaps even worried about my mental state as he looked at me.

“How can a paper plane kill someone? The victim was poisoned.”

“Indeed, under any normal circumstance, a paper plane couldn't kill anyone. But the fallen victim already had an open wound.”

The light wound he had given himself was more than enough for the killer to make use of.

“The culprit used thick paper to fold a long and narrow plane, covered the pointy end in poison and kept it hidden up his sleeve. Under normal circumstances, such an object couldn't pierce through fabric or skin. But Mr. Goodwin had already stabbed himself in the side. Pretending to support him, he got the tip of the paper plane in his sleeve to come in contact with the wound. That was all it took to kill his victim.”

Suddenly a dry laugh rang out. It was Mr. Secker. His shoulders trembled as he burst out laughing.

“No, I'm sorry. Such a unique deduction... Or rather, delusion. I couldn't help but laugh.”

“It's no delusion. In fact, there's someone who witnessed your paper plane flying.”

The smile vanished from Mr. Secker's face.

I shouted at the top of my voice.

**“I would like to summon Ramon Berger's younger brother, Armen, to the stand!”**

# Chapter 9. A Complete Turnabout!



Luckily, Armen wasn't far from the courthouse. Knowing that Ramon was to be a witness today, he and Alden had come as moral support. The two of them were eating soba at a soba shop near the courthouse waiting for the verdict to be announced.

Without even thinking about why he had been suddenly summoned, Armen looked at the witness stand with childlike curiosity.

The judge's expression softened upon seeing Armen. He's probably soft on children because of his grandkids.

“May you start by giving us your name and occupation... or rather, grade in school?”

“Sure. I'm Armen Berger, Seafield Elementary class 3-1, seat number one!”

“Hoho, a nice, loud and clear voice. Not bad!”

... It seems he's forgotten his job here and has fallen into the role of a grandfather. Regardless, I began my questioning.

“Armen. We would like to hear about the black plane you saw.”

“Eh?”

“You were discussing it with your friends. You saw a black plane even cooler than your grandfather's. That's...”

“Shh!”

Armen cut me off in a panic and put a finger to his lips.

“I never said that!”

“Eh...?”

Armen trembled nervously as he signalled me with his eyes.

It was a look that said “It's a secret...”

I immediately looked at Mr. Secker.

Surely he hasn't already threatened Armen?

But Mr. Secker simply looked downward, not even glancing in Armen's direction.

“Armen, what's wrong? Has someone threatened...”

“Shh! Shut up!”

Armen shrunk down cautiously, ready to hide under the witness stand at any moment.

That's when a loud voice rang out.

“Armen! Don't back down! You know I won't be mad with you!”

Alden shouted from the gallery. It wasn't very convincing when it looked like he was about to

blow a vein.

“Order, order. No outbursts from the gallery.”

The judge warned, before urging Armen to testify. Armen nodded and began to speak.

“I saw it on my way home that day. A black plane was flying.”

“But it wasn't a real plane, right?”

“Right, it was a paper plane of course! But it was even cooler than the real thing. It was super fast riding the wind. I considered chasing it, but I lost sight of it pretty quickly.”

“Do you remember the date and time you saw it?”

“Uuh... It was three days ago. I'd been playing with my friends at the park and was on my way home... Just after 6:00 probably. Oh yeah, I'd heard the clock chime for 6:00, so definitely after that.

The murder took place at roughly quarter to six. The time seems to match up.

“What direction did the plane come from and where did it go?”

“Hmm... It came from the park and was going towards the ocean.”

“Is the airport in the same direction as the park?”

“Yeah, it is.”

“Thank you, Armen.”

Mr. Secker folded his arms with a bored expression.

It was a face that said he was fed up with this farce.

Whether those are his true feelings or simply an act will be made clear soon.

“Armen saw a black paper plane. That is the weapon the true culprit disposed of. By using black paper, the bloodstain and poison on the tip wouldn't stand out. Mr. Secker, you told us earlier. You like the observation deck and often spend time alone there.”

“... What of it?”

“Well, you—”

I recalled Alden's words.

—Litterbugs like yourselves just toss your trash anywhere and it gets blown into the sea!

“You were going to the empty observation deck regularly to experiment with paper planes. A strong wind blows out to the sea in that city. If you throw a paper plane from high enough, it'll fly all the way out to sea. To make a plane guaranteed to fly that far, you continually experimented with different paper stocks and folding techniques.”

“Good grief. First those delusions and now this?”

Prosecutor Gavin opened his mouth.

“To claim that a paper plane seen by a young boy is related to a murder is stretching it a bit. I apologise to the boy on the stand, but this testimony is worthless.”

“But...!”



“No matter what you say, you need evidence to back it up. A theory without evidence is like a love song without love!”

Prosecutor Gavin played his air guitar.

He seems satisfied... but that was a pretty poor analogy.

The judge spoke.

“Well? Can the defence submit any evidence to corroborate the claim that a paper plane was the weapon?”

My only response was to bite my lip.

I'm on the right track... I'm pretty sure of that.

But there's no evidence. That black paper plane would have flown into the ocean.

At a speed that Armen had to give up on chasing it.

I suppose that was the culprit's goal. Dispose of the weapon by letting the strong winds carry it to sea. By now, that black paper plane is either floating somewhere out at sea or sunk to the bottom of the ocean—

... No, wait.

—No matter how much trash you scoundrels toss, I'll nicely catch it all!

There's one person with a passion for preserving the ocean's beauty.

The Paper Plane Speeding Towards The Ocean VS. The Indomitable Trash Catching Geezer. If the old man's net triumphed over the plane...

“You have no evidence then? Then I cannot acknowledge your claims. The black paper plane is irrelevant to the case.”

The judge grasped his gavel.

**“Hold it!”**

I raised my voice and looked to the gallery.

Alden was glaring at a specific spot in the courtroom. The subject of his gaze was Mr. Secker, who had a smug grin.

“The evidence exists.”

“... What did you say?”

“There's someone who was able to recover the weapon before it was disposed of!”

I called out to the old man.

“Mr. Alden Berger. Tell us. Did you manage to catch the black paper plane as it went by?”

Alden shifted his gaze to me, giving a solemn nod.

“... Of course I did. Nothing escapes the judgement of my net.”

... Yes! Alden is a true guardian of the ocean!

“What did you do with the black paper plane you caught!? Do you still have it!?”

We're screwed if it's been thrown out already.

However Alden simply turned away sulkily.

“Alden? Do you still have the paper plane?”

“...”

“Alden! Uh, so, the paper plane...”

Thinking he might be hard of hearing, I raised my volume, and Alden dialled the volume up even more for his reply.

**“Shut up! I can hear you!”**

“Uh... Well... In that case...”

“The plane is still at home. It's hidden in the closet in my room!”

“Your closet...?”

“Really, grandpa?”

Armen said wide eyed from the witness stand.

“You really have that black paper plane? Why didn't you say so sooner!?”

Alden's face went red with frustration.

“Sh.. shut up! It's because you were all up in arms about the awesome black paper plane you saw! Even though you always said my planes were the best in the world! **But you were cheating on my plane with that one!**”

... Ah.

So basically, he was jealous that his grandson thought the black paper plane was cooler than his. How childish.

“I considered throwing it out, but it truly was magnificently made.. It'd be a shame to just toss it out, so I secretly hid it away in my closet.”

“Really? So it's still in your closet now then?”



“... Yep.”

“Alden. May we present the paper plane as evidence to the court?”

Alden wordlessly gazed at Mr. Secker again.

Mr. Secker's demeanour had changed. The sharp, intelligent impression he gave had crumbled and he looked down with a bitter expression.

Alden spoke harshly to him.

“... So that plane was one of yours after all. I figured it might be. You always did like coming up with your own way to fold them.”

“...”

“Using your beloved paper planes for such evil deeds... your younger self would be mortified at what you've become.”

After muttering to himself, Alden turned back to me.

“Hmph.. If you want that thing, it's yours.”

I looked straight at Prosecutor Gavin.

“I told you so. The defence would like to submit the paper plane used as the weapon. You should be able to find the poison and Mr. Goodwin's blood on the tip and the killer's fingerprints on the body.”

Prosecutor Gavin clenched his fists on his desk.

The judge spoke up, looking at the silent Prosecutor Gavin.

“The court will accept this evidence and have it examined. Until the results are in, I declare a recess...”

“No need for that.”

Having finally regained his composure, Prosecutor Gavin lifted his head.

“Dragging things out is simply a waste of time... Aren't you the one who said that, Mr. Secker?”

Mr. Secker flinched as his name was said.

He looked as if he'd aged ten years within the past few minutes.

“I... I... I did nothing wrong. I simply exterminated vermin.”

Mr. Secker groaned in a quivering voice.

“If I didn't act, he would have escaped into hospital, he'd avoid responsibility and continue working as a politician. Any misconduct would be pinned on his secretary...”

Mr. Secker fell to his knees and screamed.

**“I protected our city. That's right, I excised that vermin from our home. The people of our city should be thanking meeeeeeee—!”**

A bailiff ran over and subdued Mr. Secker as he continued ranting.

The judge cleared his throat as he gently picked up his gavel.

“It seems waiting for the analysis of the evidence will not be necessary. It's about time I handed down my verdict.”

He brought his gavel down. The dry sound echoed through the courtroom.

“The defendant, Apollo Justice is declared not guilty!”

The silent gallery began to stir.

“All right! You did it, Mr. Wright!”

Athena leapt in joy.

Trucy, who had been in the gallery until now, also came down showing a victory pose.

Apollo, sitting in the defendant's chair, gave me the first real smile I'd seen from him in a while.

Despite the trial only lasting two days, it felt more like it had been two weeks, I let out a long sigh of relief.

# Chapter 10. What's Important to an Attorney

[March 16, 9:12 AM: Wright Anything Agency]

“Alden Berger is a true blue lover of paper planes. He's taught the local kids how to make paper planes for decades.”

It was the day after the trial ended. I was sat on the office sofa, talking on my cell phone.

“Terry Secker, the killer, was a particularly frequent visitor to Alden when he was young. He loved paper planes and would devise his own ways of folding them to fly further, Alden really took him under his wing.”

“And now he's a killer... Poor Alden.”

“Yeah.”

Naturally, I was talking to Maya. She'd been concerned over how the trial had gone and called me.

“And to add insult to injury, those beloved paper planes became the murder weapon his former apprentice had used. I'm sure Alden is suffering.”

“Sounds like he used to be a decent kid. I wonder where he went wrong?”

“He's always had a strong sense of justice apparently. He wanted to enter politics for the sake of his ambitious ideals, but ended up in a bad workplace. His heart became warped while at the side of Mr. Goodwin, who had been up to all kinds of evil deeds behind his clean image.”

Mr. Secker had played the role of Mr. Goodwin's loyal secretary, while harbouring a secret hatred deep inside.

After discovering Mr. Goodwin's wrongdoings, he found that an investigation team wasn't far behind. And when the law finally caught up, Mr. Goodwin would say “I knew nothing of this. It was all my secretary's doing.” to feign ignorance.

“Mr. Secker figured that the crimes would be pinned on himself instead at this rate. That's when he began to panic. Then when Mr. Goodwin suggested he fake hospitalisation, his plan came into view. It seems the location of the airport and using the ice pick as a dummy weapon were all Mr. Secker's idea. Mr. Goodwin went along with it not suspecting a thing.”

“So he was going to string up an innocent bystander as the culprit. That Goodwin guy was a jerk!”

“That may be true. But it still doesn't absolve Mr. Secker of his own crime.”

I protected our city – Mr. Secker may have claimed that, but his true motives didn't align with justice. With Mr. Goodwin gone, he would inherit the voters of his constituency, allowing him to

become just like Mr. Goodwin.

Following the verdict, various dark deals made between Mr. Goodwin and members of the public came to light. For example, Flora Templa had been in trouble for performing various scams and gone crying to Mr. Goodwin. Gonzalo Sacco had been so caught up in a soccer broadcast that he'd caused a traffic accident, and had asked Mr. Goodwin for help with that. As we heard directly from Dr. Mendel, he'd helped cover up a malpractice incident.

And this was just the tip of the iceberg. Mr. Goodwin was practically the king of Seafield city. Any dissenters would face the town's wrath. This led to victims like the Berger family.

"Seafield city has been a twisted place, but I think it'll start improving from now on."

"And it's all thanks to you, Nick!"

"Not really..."

I wouldn't have won this trial on my own. After the first day in court, I was so worn out in both body and soul that I had forgotten how to smile.

The one who helped me back then was—

"It's all thanks to you, Maya."

"Eh?"

"Maya, it was you who reminded me of something important."

A lawyer is someone who smiles no matter how bad it gets. An important lesson I'd learned from Mia.

Whenever I felt like throwing in the towel, those words were what kept me on track.

"... Heheh."

Maya gave her usual carefree laugh.

"So you're finally realising my true value?"

"Yeah, I guess."

"Then instead of burgers, you should treat me to some ramen when I get back to the States. I'd like to try the Flying Spaghetti Master's menma."

"Sure, no problem."

I laughed as we ended our call.

The Flying Spaghetti Master's menma sure is good stuff. It's a bit far to go for a meal though... Just as I was thinking about that.

The door opened and a lively bunch came in.

"Good morning, Mr. Wright!"

"Mr. Wright, I can't thank you enough for your efforts!"

"Daddy, we bring good news!"

It was Athena, Apollo and Trucy.

But not just the three of them. Another unexpected face popped in.

“Mornin', Mr. Wright!”

It was Ramon. His expression was no longer the one he had at the Flying Spaghetti Master and the courtroom, he was bright and cheerful.

“Ramon! Why are you here?”

“I've got good news. I wanted to tell you as soon as possible, so I decided to come nice and early!”

Good news... Trucy had said so too.

Before I could even ask, Ramon came out and said it.

“You really are amazing. You're every bit the legendary straight man Apollo aspires to be!”

... Is that really something to aspire to?

“You didn't just save Apollo. You saved the entirety of Seafield city. After yesterday's verdict, we had a proper talk with the neighbors. There's still tension with certain people, but overall they were really willing to clear the air. Some of them honestly wanted to support the Flying Spaghetti Master. But they were too afraid of Mr. Goodwin to openly oppose him... They made sure to apologise to us...”

Ramon got emotional as he spoke.

“Together we swore to rebuild our city. That Seafield city will be reborn!”

“I see. Good to hear...”

“You're the saviour of Seafield city! We'll never forget our debt to you. Which is why I came up with an idea. A new Seafield specialty, Phoenix Wright ramen!”

... Huh?

What the heck...?

“Well take a look. This is the recipe!”

Ramon pulled a large sheet of paper from his bag and laid it out.

... It was a picture of ramen. It looked to be overflowing with ingredients.

“It combines the Flying Spaghetti Master's special menma, special char siu pork fillet and special boiled egg. And the centrepiece of the bowl is the Wright kamaboko! It's an extra large kamaboko with your face printed on it!”

And indeed there was a giant kamaboko with my face on it surrounded by mountains of menma and pork.

While I was lost for words, Trucy spoke up.

“No need to worry, I've already signed the contract, Daddy. The Wright Anything Agency gets ten percent of every sale!”

“Haha! Your daughter is one shrewd businesswoman.”

“You drive a hard bargain too, mister. I originally wanted a thirty percent cut.”

“Come on, cut me a break.”

Ramon and Trucy both broke out laughing.

Athena and Apollo joined in too.

“That Mr. Wright kamaboko looks tasty!”

“I’m not sure about eating Mr. Wright, but I’ll give it a try. After all, it’s a new specialty item on Ramon’s menu.”

“We’ll be adding it real soon. I’d love for you all to have some!”

Despite using my image, I’ve been left out entirely...

There’s only one thing to say at a time like this. At the top of my lungs.

“—**Objection!**”

*Phoenix Wright: Ace Attorney – Turnabout Airport*

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